

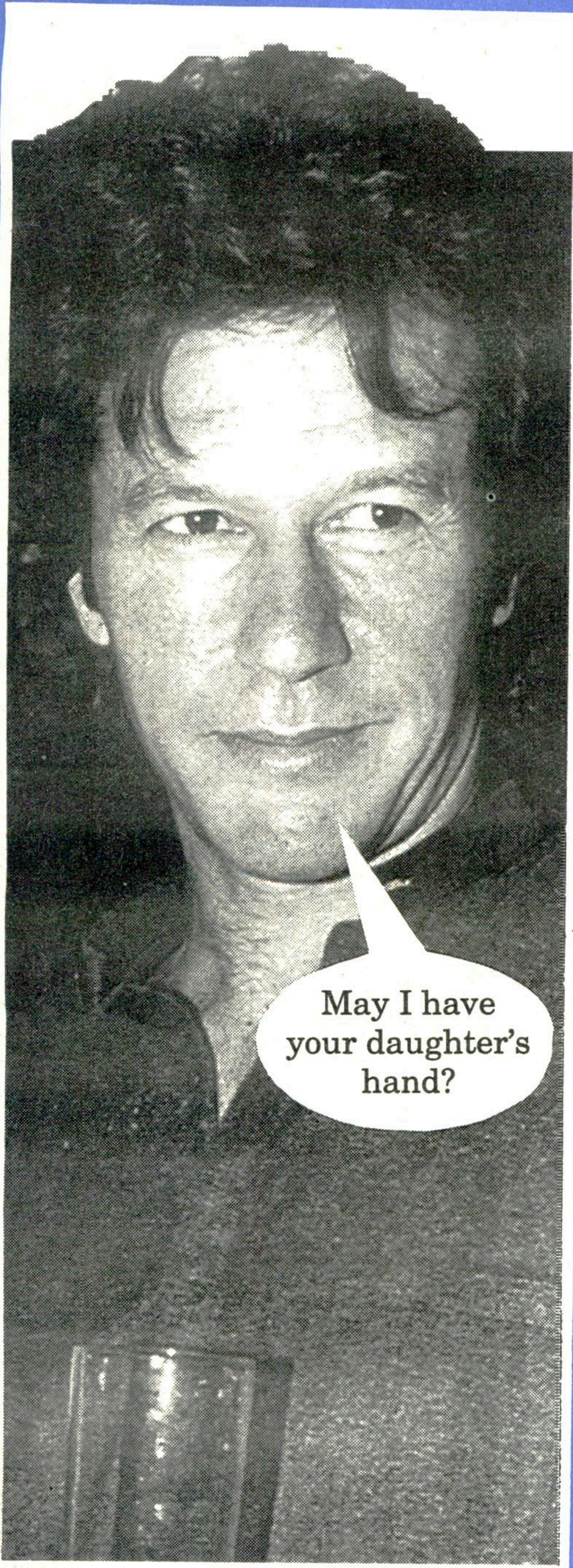


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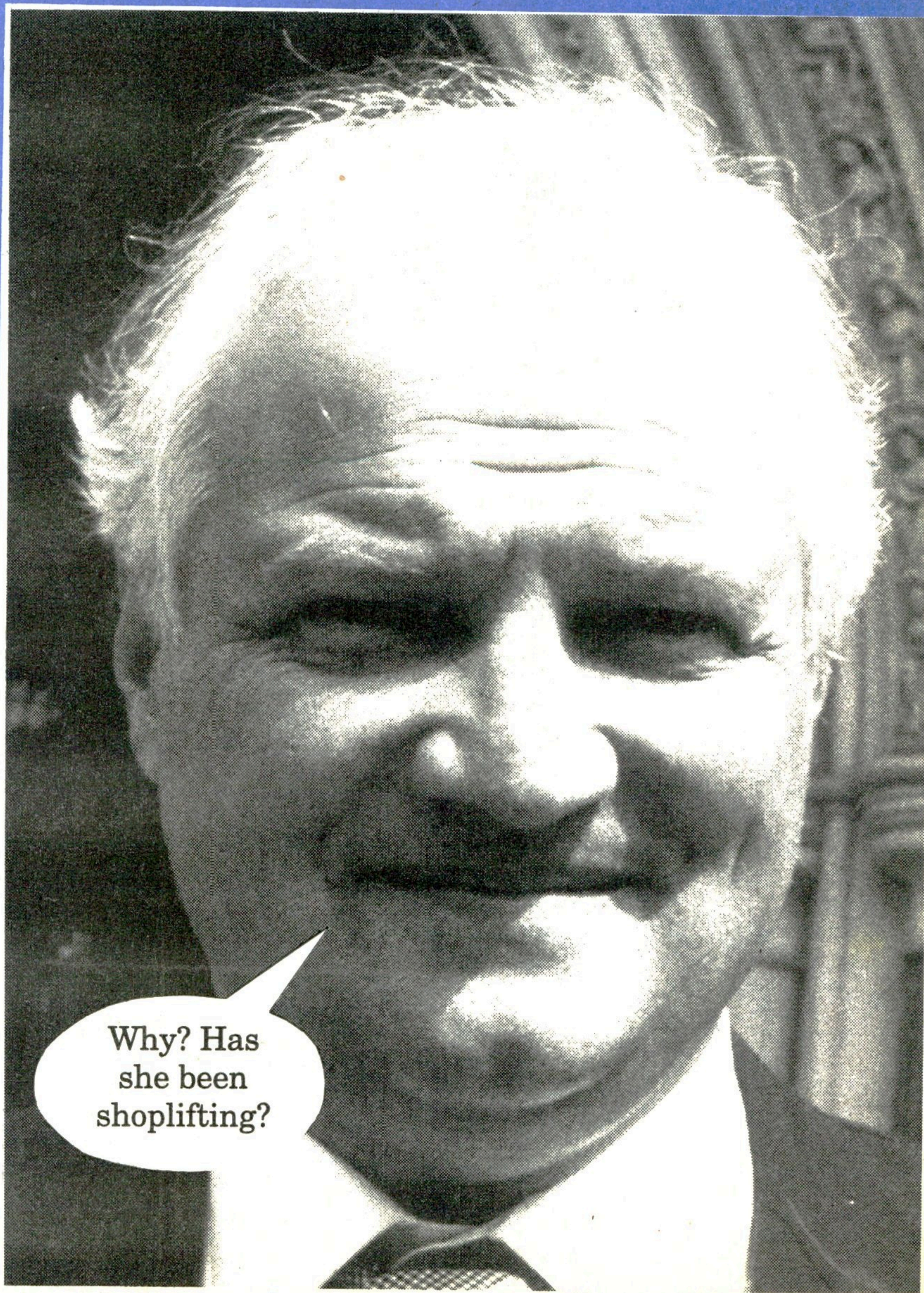
No. 872
Friday
19 May '95

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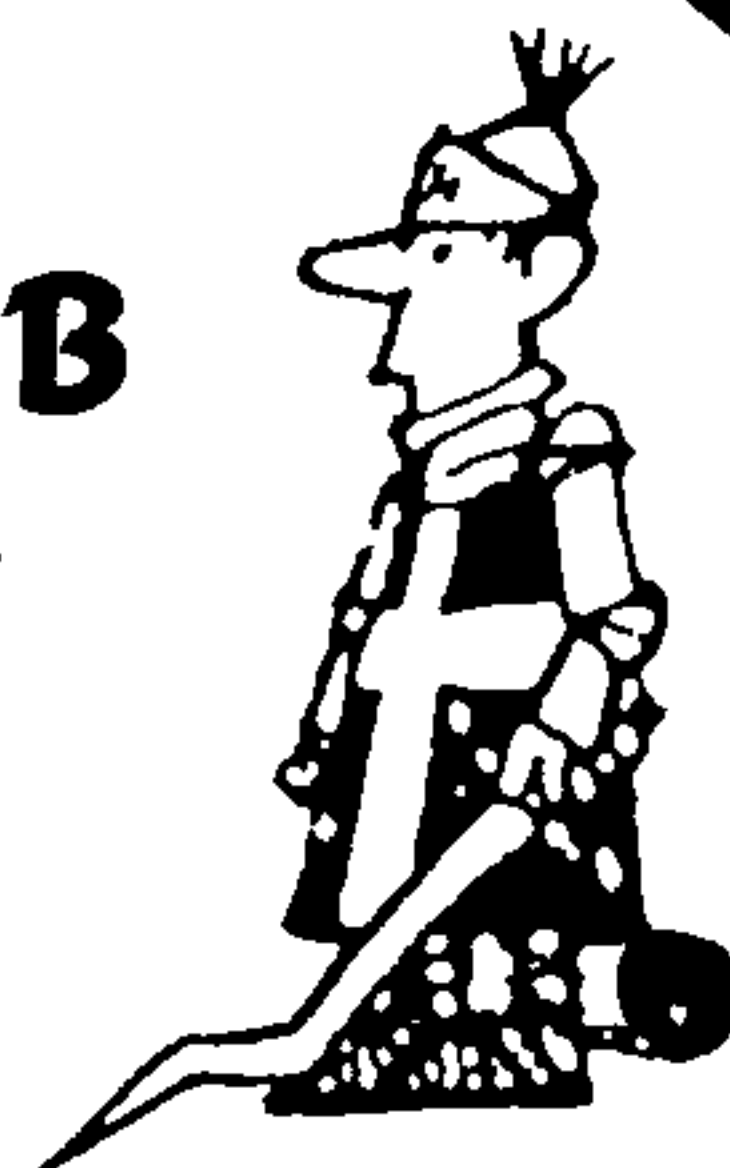


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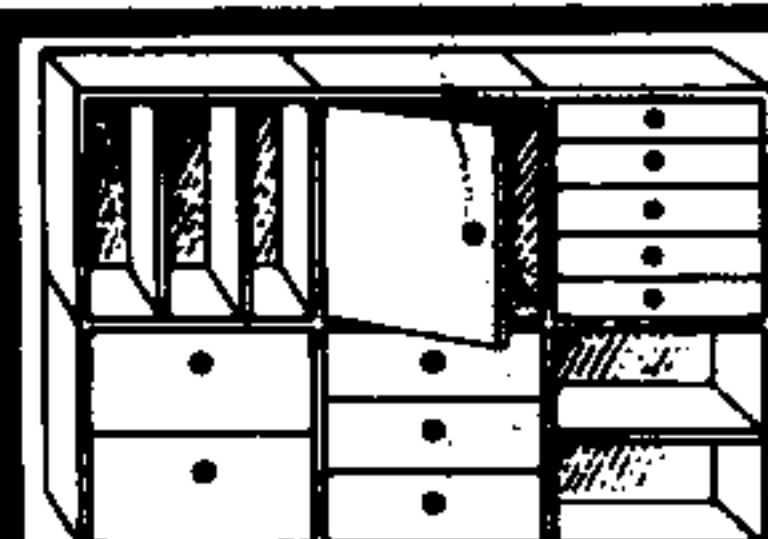


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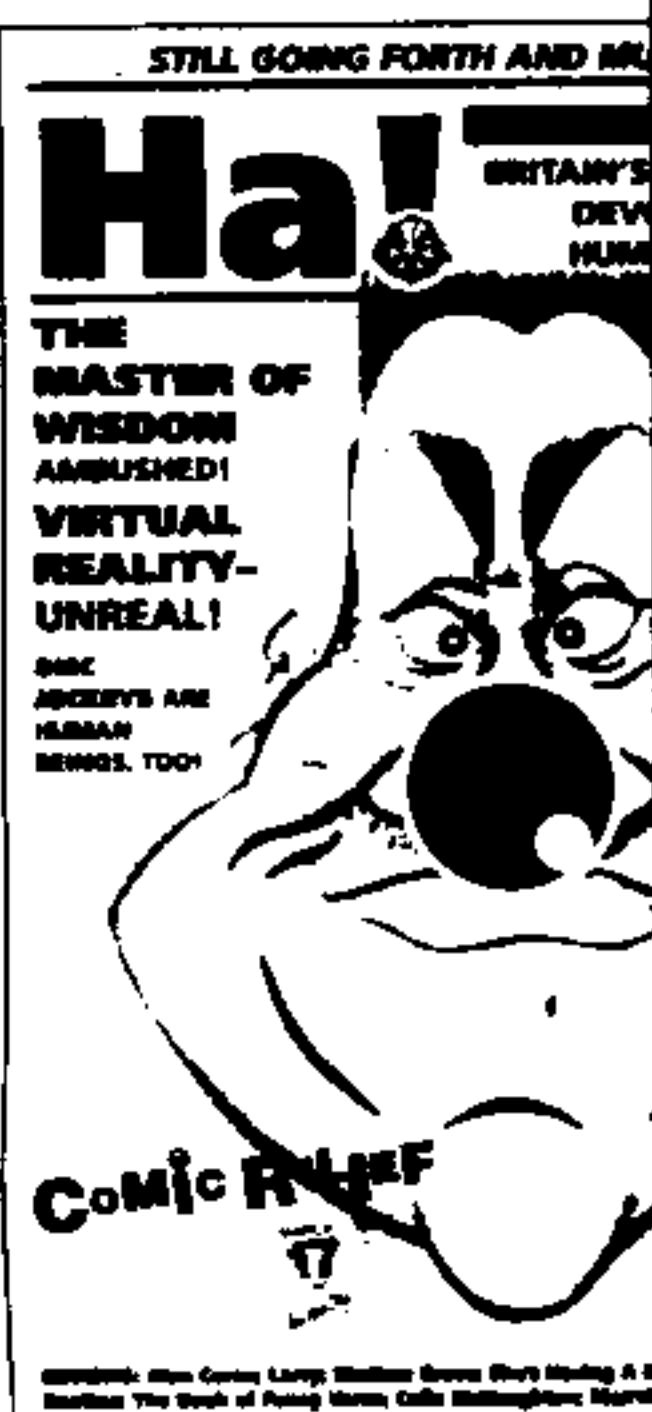
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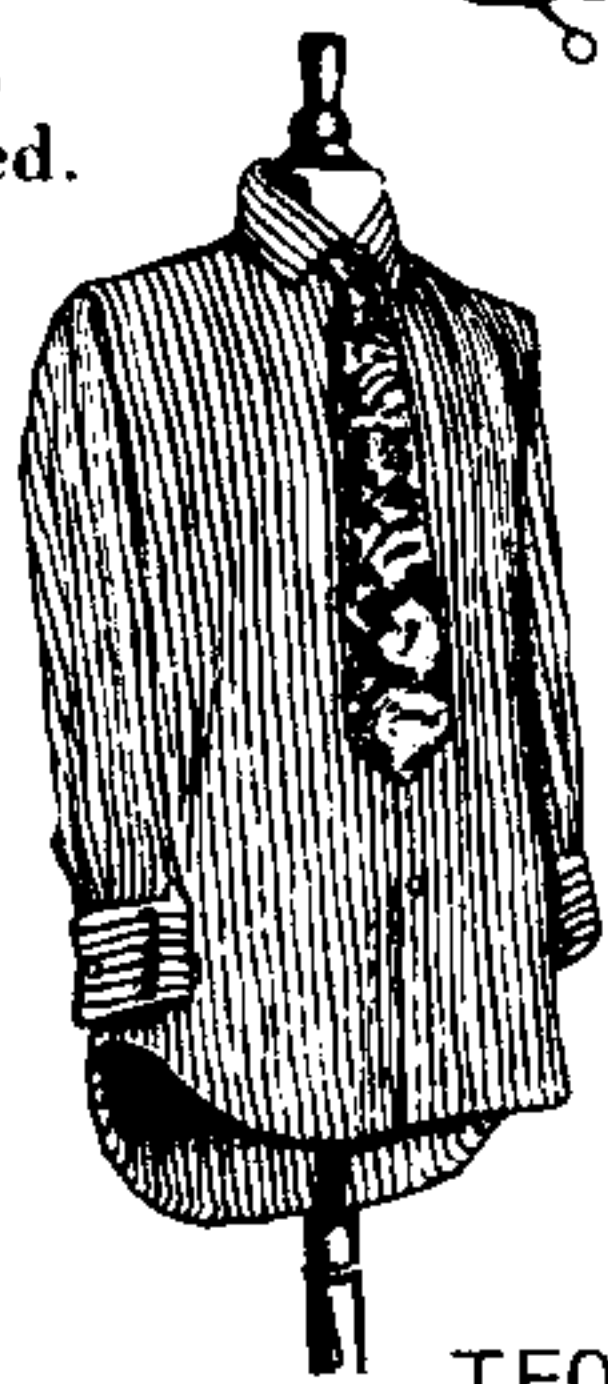
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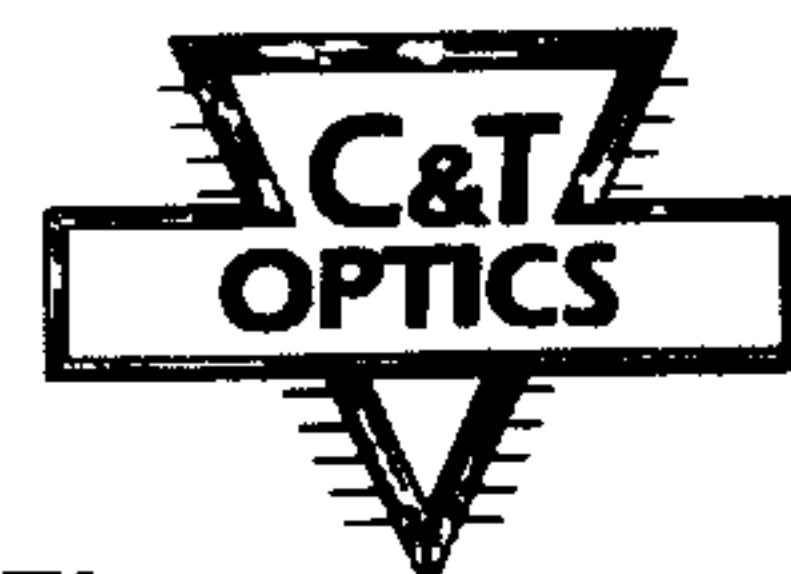
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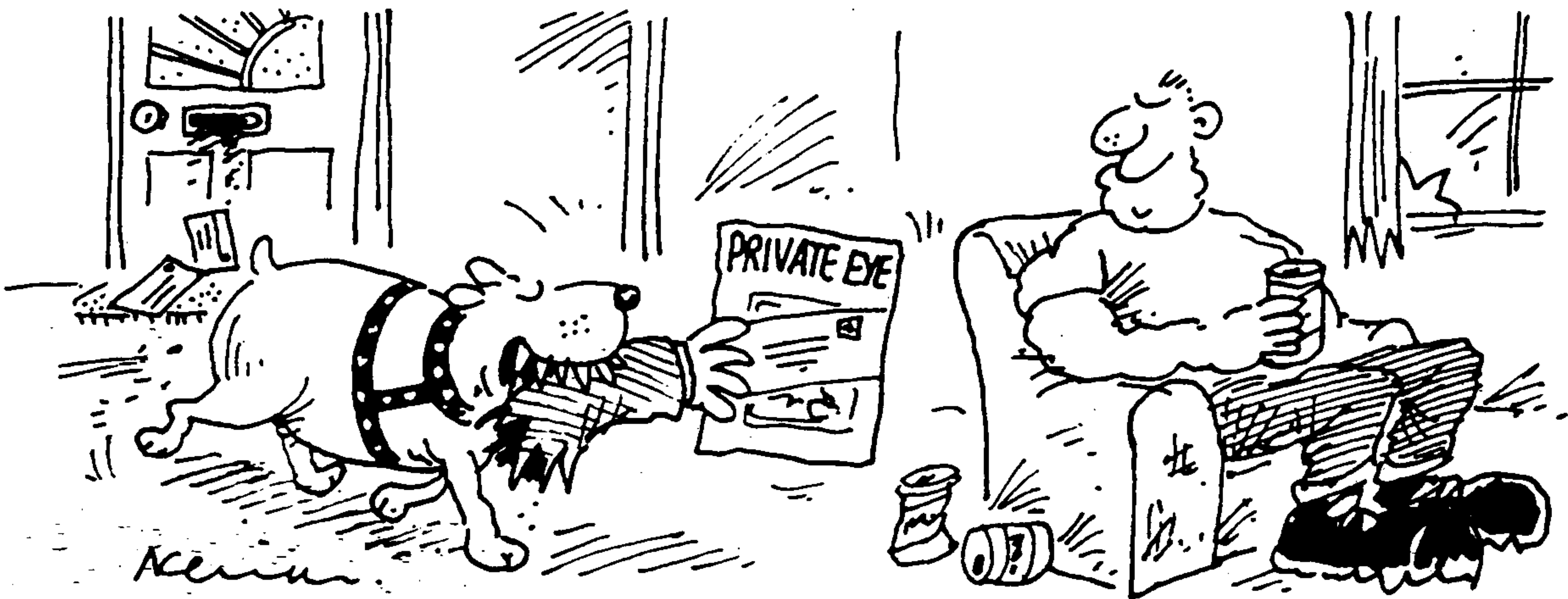
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I AM delighted to announce, having heard it on Radio Five Live ten minutes ago, that my youngest daughter Jeremima is to wed the distinguished table-tennis international and Islamic leader Mr Genghis Khan.

Her mother and I would like to make it clear that we could not be happier that this former Pakistan playboy has decided to settle down with one of the richest girls in the world (*shurely 'most beautiful, sensitive and intelligent'?* E.S.).

Let me add that my son-in-law-to-be has all the qualities that I most admire in myself. He is vain, cheats where necessary, has strings of women on the go and wants to rule the world.

What proud father could wish for more?

And, above all, neither he nor my daughter Imrana (as she will now be known) is allowed to imbibe any alcohol at all, thereby saving me a small fortune in champagne at the reception.

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COLOUR SECTION

IF ANY one person can be held responsible for delaying publication of the Scott report on Iraqgate, it is former foreign secretary Lord Howe.

Ever since his amazing outburst at the inquiry (in which he attacked Scott for not allowing witnesses to be legally represented) Howe has assumed the role of wetnurse to the senior civil servants who got a drubbing at the inquiry.

Regular meetings are held, almost weekly, in which a self-appointed committee of disgruntled mandarins discusses new ways to obstruct the Scott report's publication.

Leaks and innuendos are sprayed around the press, including in recent days the bizarre notion that the judge's tactics may be subjected to a judicial review. All these matters are studied carefully by the ubiquitous Howe who feels he is a guardian of what he told Scott were his "flock" — his former advisers at the foreign office.

STATEMENTS submitted by John Stalker, the broadcaster and former deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, in the case of Kevin Taylor v Manchester police, came, with one small exception, exclusively from his book *Stalker*, which was one of the non-fiction bestsellers of the 1980s.

The book tells the story of how Stalker was smeared with all sorts of wild allegations in order to justify his removal from an official inquiry into the trigger-happiness of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. As part of the smear campaign, Stalker's friend Kevin Taylor, a Manchester businessman and former chairman of the North West Conservatives, was arrested and indicted on a series of trumped-up charges which, after years of delays and harassment, were thrown out of court. Now Taylor is suing the police for what he claims was a false prosecution which wrecked his life.

Stalker provided him with a series of statements which went over the old ground in his book. Quick as a flash, the Northern Ireland secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew applied to the court to exclude most of Stalker's evidence on the ground that it might disclose confidential information about criminal investigations and might also be a threat to national security. This case was presented to Mr Justice Owen by two barristers, Ian Burnett and Keith Morton, both of whose chambers are at 1 Temple Gardens in London — the chambers of the Rt Hon Patrick Mayhew QC MP.

A curious feature of the case was the enthusiasm with which it was supported by the Manchester police lawyers who, strictly speaking, had nothing to do with Mayhew's application. Faced with an application from a secretary of state, supported by the defendant in the case, the judge rather grudgingly accepted most of it, though he

appeared at one stage to invite the plaintiffs to appeal.

If the judge's ruling stands, Stalker's crucial evidence will be cut to shreds and an enormously important part of Taylor's case will be censored — for reasons which are wholly indefensible.

Mayhew is a dab hand at this sort of thing. When customs and excise was prosecuting Christopher Cowley, a Bristol engineer, and Peter Mitchell, managing director of Walter Somers, for their part in manufacturing a supergun for illegal export to Iraq, Mayhew was attorney-general. He called in customs chiefs and told them, in the nicest possible way, that if they didn't drop the prosecution he would take it over and drop it himself. Customs meekly obliged and the case was dropped.

AS PREDICTED in *Eye* 861, Andersen Consulting has won the £150 million contract to build "NIRS2", the new national insurance (NI) computer system for the department of social security.

The scheme will be awarded under the "Private Funding Initiative" (PFI), the government's latest wheeze for rewarding friendly suppliers and ensuring that cock-ups cannot be cancelled until the end of the contract, when it's too late.

Following bad publicity for failed DSS systems (*Eyes passim*), the department's computer agency, ITSA, had intended to fund projects along traditional lines but with tighter scrutiny: inspecting progress at regular intervals and withholding payment if things went wrong. That was until the PFI idea was suggested... by the management consultancy, Arthur Andersen.

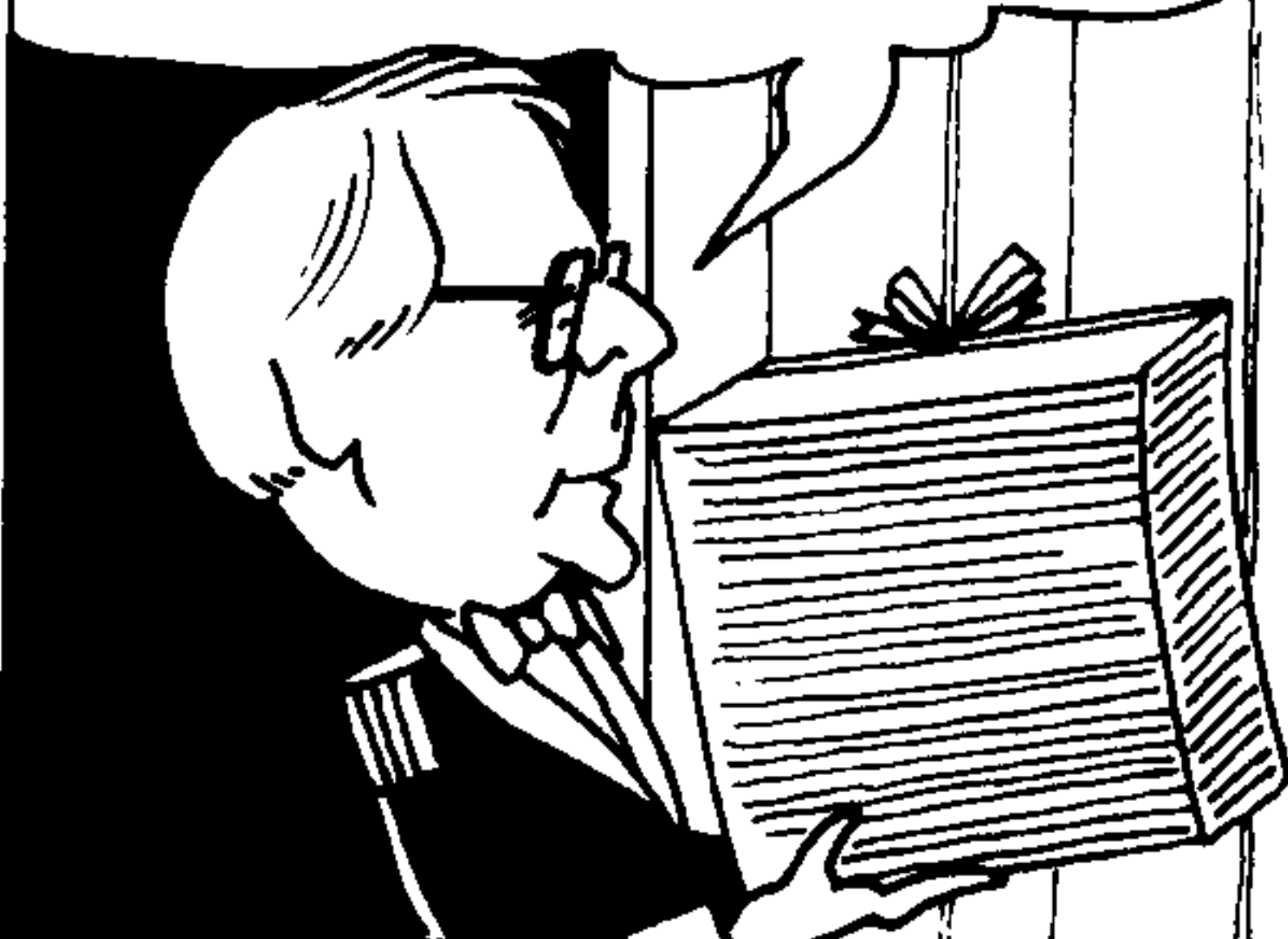
THERE are signs that the *Sunday Times* is already seeking to escape the consequences of its fantastic allegations against the former Labour leader Michael Foot.

As reported in the last *Eye*, the celebrated huntsman, antique dealer and one-time *Express* hack Barrie Penrose has been put full time on the case. Recently, flanked by a *Sunset Times* lawyer, he went all the way to Moscow to interview Viktor Kubeykin, the former KGB agent in London who played such an important part in the original *Sunday Times* story by David "Lockerbie" Leppard.

Leppard alleged that Kubeykin had confirmed that Foot had been an "agent of influence". Kubeykin immediately, publicly and furiously denied that he had said any such thing. Indeed, he had said the exact opposite.

Penrose employed all his unctuous charm to persuade the Russian to take part in a scheme which the *Sunday Times* hopes will settle the matter in secret to everyone's satisfaction without going to court. Kubeykin was not impressed and Penrose retired hurt.

LORD NOLAN. I CAN PROMISE YOU THERE WILL BE NO MORE REVELATIONS ABOUT SLEAZE



BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LOOK INTO PARTY FUNDS



STREET OF SHAME

THE *Sunset Times* may be rather displeased with its absurd "gossip columnist" Taki following his revelation last weekend that he was "not surprised by the Imran Khan-Jemima Goldsmith engagement. It has been going on for about a year". Why, his editors may wonder, had he never mentioned the fact?

Also in the sulks are Nigel Dempster's bosses at the *Daily Mail*. For years Dumpster has used his column to flatter and publicise his Richmond neighbour Lady Annabel Goldsmith. Yet, as he confessed last Sunday, the engagement took him "totally by surprise". Why didn't Lady Annabel tip him the wink?

The hero of the hour, meanwhile, is Quentin Letts of the *Daily Telegraph's* Peterbore column. Having heard rumours about the Imran-Jemima nuptials, he spent much of last Thursday badgering Patrick Robertson, the ambitious young puppy who founded the Bruges Group and now acts as PR man for Jimmy Goldsmith. Robertson refused to say anything — and then sabotaged Letts's scoop by issuing a statement at first-edition time, so every other paper could run the story too.

Robertson's uncooperativeness towards the *Telegraph* did not end there. When *Torygraph* hackette Caroline Davies rang him at the weekend he pompously informed her that he "couldn't speak to reporters on a Sunday".

This seems a little ungrateful. Is Robertson unaware that Sir James Goldsmith is a close friend of Conrad Black, and was until recently a director of the *Telegraph*?

BIZARRE news from the *Mirror* stable, where Keith Fisher, sports editor of the *Sunday Mirror* and previous sports editor of the daily, has been receiving nuisance telephone calls at his home.

The calls came over many weeks at various times of the day and night and at weekends. Each time, however, the pattern was familiar: the mystery caller said nothing and there was silence for several seconds until the caller's telephone was put down.

When Fisher's wife and children became worried, however, Fisher decided it was time to act. With the help of BT's pest-catching service, the unwanted calls were traced to a telephone at a flat in Wapping, east London.

When Fisher dialled the nuisance number he was given by BT, lo and behold the telephone was answered by Fisher's old rival David "Balmy" Balmforth, former sports editor at the *Sun* and now sitting in Fisher's old seat as sports editor of the *Daily Mirror*.

The sole occupant of the Wapping flat is David Balmforth, and since Staines police, the MGN management and Fisher's lawyer have been informed, the pest calls have stopped.

AFTER the Tory wipe-out at the local elections, the *Daily Mirror's* demented deputy editor Brendon "Chucky" Parsons called over

roly-poly royal hack James Whitaker to demand: "What way did the Queen vote last night?"

John McShane, associate editor (news), was beside himself with glee. "Brilliant, boss," he cackled. "Bloody brilliant!"

Whitaker then explained gently a fact any fule kno: the Queen, constitutionally, is not allowed to vote.

Another category banned from voting are lunatics, a club "Chucky" clearly aspires to join. He then insisted Whitaker find out which members of the royal family play the *Mirror's* instant scratch card game. The great socialist organ's champagne-sozzled royal hack got out of this one by explaining that Brenda plays bingo.

AT his drunken leaving do, *Daily Express* deputy editor Paul Potts made many cruel swipes concerning the stewardship of the once great organ.

He claimed that on the days he was editing a prankster would often ring up, usually from a foreign golf course, to bark out orders such as: my step-daughter works at *Vogue*, kindly publish her picture; pull that article, my wife Eve doesn't like it; or: what idiot put that crap in the paper?

No doubt *Express* editor "Sir" Nicholas Lloyd, who enjoys his golf and has presided over the rag's majestic 700,000 circulation loss, is trying to sack the prankster even now.

Lloyd originally promised Potts's job to the paper's number three, Alan Frame, but while Frame was on holiday in South Africa he reneged, possibly fearing that someone able might jeopardise his own career. Hence the job went to Craig Mackenzie, which sent gasps of disbelief across the *Depress's* editorial floor.

Ignorant, crude, loud-mouthed, bullying and totally without talent (and these are his good points), Bogbrush was fired by his brother Kelvin from the *Sun* after it paid the £1 million "rent boy" damages to Elton John, and was also axed by Sir Nick's wife Eve Pollard at the *Sunday Express*.

As Stephen Glover wrote in the London *Evening Standard*, Craig McKenzie makes his brother Kelvin look like Zola. Alas for the author of *J'Accuse*, allusions to the giants of French literature fall on deaf ears at the *Express* these days. As a bemused features editor Niki Chesworth asked on hearing the comparison: "What's the connection between Kelvin McKenzie and Zola Budd?"

TIM SATCHELL, aka The World's Worst Diarist, who has been sacked from publications as diverse as *Today* and *Hello!*, has rendered himself unsackable by starting up his own magazine, *The Insider*.

He boasts that it will be a bold, independent gossip organ, fearlessly rooting out skulduggery in Fleet Street, the City and elsewhere — though in the nicest possible way.

Who is putting up the money for this doomed venture? Last week the *Eye* asked Neil Collins, City editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, if he was one of Satchell's backers. "Um... er... well, let's just say I've given him considerable assistance." And money? "Well... er... you ought to talk to Tim Satchell."

No need: for we already know the answer. The bashful Collins has in fact paid £5,000 for 5,000 shares worth 10p each in Insider Trading Ltd. More intriguingly he has also persuaded two of his City chums to stump up. Brian Basham, the former king of financial PR men (whose past clients include British Airways) is investing £5,000. Alan Parker, managing director of the huge City PR firm

Private I-I-I!

THIS ISSUE'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch.

Ego Rating

1	Harry Enfield (IoS 14/5)	2.64
2	Zoë Heller (Sunday Times 14/5)	2.19
3	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 7/5)	1.80
4	Zoë Heller (Sunday Times 7/5)	1.76
5	Harry Enfield (IoS 7/5)	1.65
6	Kenneth Baker (MoS 7/5)	1.46
7	Frank Johnson (Daily Telegraph 11/5)	1.33
8	A.A. Gill (Sunday Times 7/5)	1.22
9	Jack Tinker (Daily Mail 6/5)	1.20

Bubblin' under: Jonathan Woss, Bernard Levin, Will Carling, Justine Picardie.

Brunswick, is chipping in £10,000.

Will Parker's and Basham's clients — who include many of our leading businesses — be subjected to rigorous scrutiny in *The Insider*? Watch this space... but don't hold your breath. For, as a shareholder agreement dated 17 April 1995 helpfully explains, "one of the roles" of Collins, Basham and Parker will be "to provide help, advice and assistance to the company". *Very independent.*

JULIE BURCHILL is already a hot contender for the world's worst columnist after only one outing in the *Sunday Times*. Her first sentence included the words "my young friend" to announce to the world that she is now living as a lesbian with the crew-cut Charlotte Raven.

A long dreary man-hating rant followed, including a piss-poor piece about her girlfriend's role as women's officer at Manchester university five years ago. This failed to mention the allegations of vote-rigging for this post at the time, nor Charlotte's nickname of "Myra Hindley", given to her by jealous opponents.

"Novelist" Burchill has left house-husband Cosmo Landesman after singing his praises endlessly in print and Charlotte has dumped Labour MP Peter Mandelson's assistant, Derek Draper.

We can now look forward to more insights of the "all men want to do is watch impoverished Mexican women having sex with donkeys" variety.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

THE appointment of Lord Rawlinson's grand-daughter Natasha Garnett to the *Sunday Telegraph* (see last *Eye*) is in keeping with family tradition.

Her mother Daniel Garnett (Lord R's daughter) was employed in the London office of the *New Yorker*. Its manager, Louis Dominguez, just happened to be Lord Rawlinson's brother-in-law!

CONGRATULATIONS to *Sunset Times* TV critic A.A. Gill: his promotion of Nicola Formby, his innamorata, has paid off: the good-looking model has landed a job as a journalist with Gill's other employer, *Tatler*.

Tatler editor Jane Proctor has signed Formby as her new beauty editor. She has impeccable qualifications for the post having been squired by, among others, Viscount Lindley, Simon Sebag-Montefiore, media heir Jamie Packer and something called Taki.

Formby was introduced to *Tatler* by Gill after he left his wife and two children for her. How witty of the snobbish "Pearly Queen" Proctor to spot such a major new writing talent.

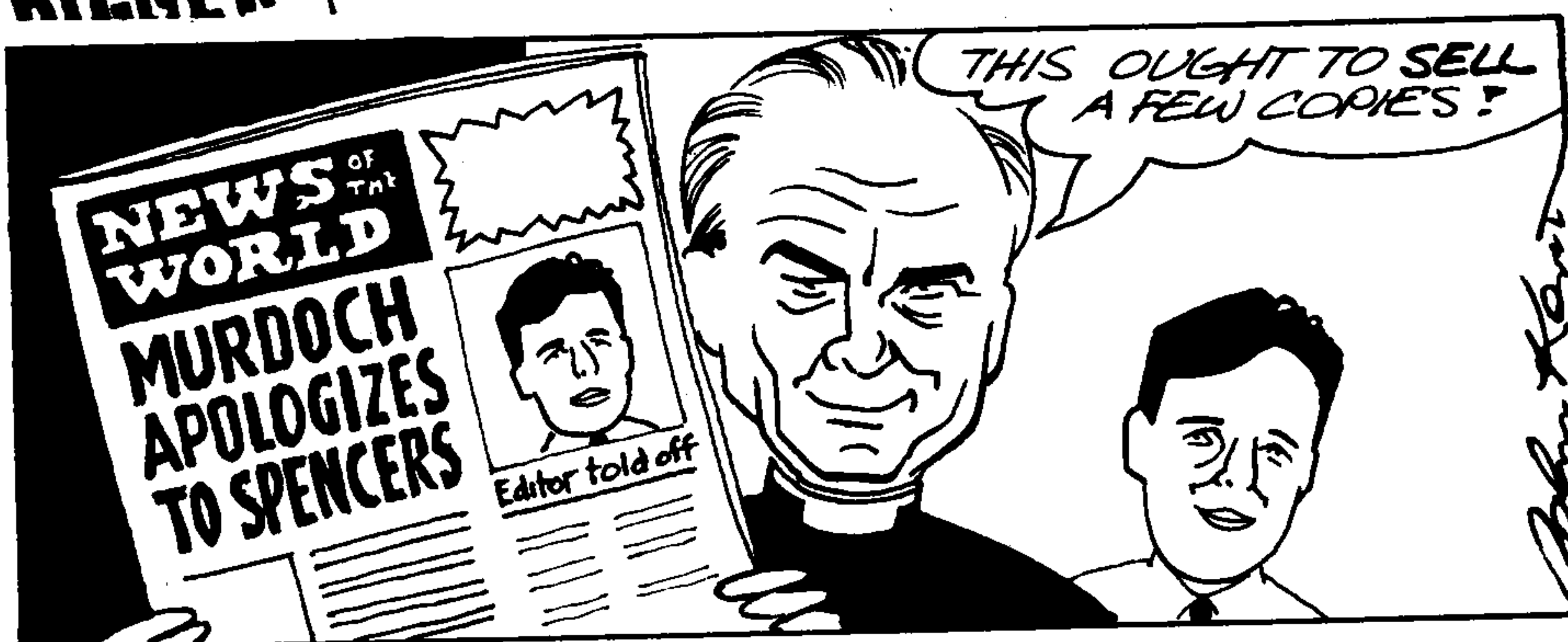
Sources close to the deadline...

A round-up of unidentified sources used by hacks desperate to give credibility to tedious press releases and PR handouts. This issue's champion is the *Sun's* Andy Coulson who in the last fortnight has "quoted":

7 "insiders"; 1 "family friend"; 7 "spokesmen"; 1 "friend"; 1 "fan"; 1 "onlooker".

Can anyone top this?

THE REV
DIGGER



HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN



HALLO! NICHOLAS SOAMES, the armed services minister and a grandson of Sir Winston Churchill, was not happy as a sandbag when he sneered at the "vulgarians" singing *Congratulations* outside the gates of Buckingham Palace on VE-Day.

How embarrassing for Soames that his own vulgar colleagues were responsible for this lapse of taste. For there in the *Official Celebration Souvenir Programme* published "on behalf of the government", after a stirring message from John Major, was a songsheet including classic airs like *Congratulations, You'll be a Bachelor Boy (until your dying day)* and *Summer Holiday*. The latter — "We're going where the sun shines brightly, we're going where the sea is blue" — is sure to have touched the hearts of veterans of the North Atlantic campaign especially!

In proper military tradition the MoD passed the buck to the department of national heritage and the department of national heritage blamed the publishers. At least the publisher, a tiny outfit called *Whitehall Productions*, shows an authentic wartime spirit: "We're just waiting for the money to come in!" a chirpy spokesman told the Marquesa.

HALLO! TO Downing Street where a newly "modernist" prime minister is showing off his new picture collection.

He tells the Marquesa that he is "getting rid" of all the "stuffy stuff" that was displayed by Lady Thatcher, including various Turners and a bronze by Henry Moore, whose late son Bobby, Mr Major adds proudly, once played centre forward for England.

He is replacing them with "hot items" borrowed from various national art galleries and has gone for trendy names like Howard Hodgkin and Frank Auerbach. In pride of place, however, is David Hockney's huge portrait... of his mum and dad from Bradford, Ken and Laura. Such classless taste!

HALLO! WHILE celebrating the happy news of Imran Khan's union with that demure and devout Muslim Jemima Goldsmith, the Marquesa's thoughts strayed to a dinner she attended years ago with Sir James and Lady Annabel Goldsmith, and the publisher Anthony Blond.

"When I come to power," Sir James announced, no doubt in jest, "some people will be shot immediately. Tariq Ali would be top of the list."

Blond pointed out that the nobby Pakistani was a friend of his and wasn't such a bad chap really, whereupon Lady Annabel began to cry. "There there," Blond murmured soothingly, "I'm sure Jimmy wouldn't really shoot my chum."

Alas, he had misunderstood the cause of her grief. "I'm not crying because of that," she explained. "I'm crying at the thought that you can know such ghastly people."

HALLO!

IMRAN himself was in Pakistan three weeks ago, recording an interview with Channel 4. The marriage question was raised and the great ball-tamperer replied:

"Well, it's just a question of finding someone, but obviously she would have to be a Muslim." He then added significantly that "race is not important".

Quite so. As the Marquesa has always maintained, and Imran has now proved, what matters is not race but class — something the deliciously rich Jemima has in abundance!



"Have you noticed how we never seem to do anything together anymore?"

HALLO!

GOSSIP columnist turned leading theologian and Tory MP for Sutton and Cheam, Lady Olga Maitland, has been in the news again.

She has found Britain's answer to Lourdes, and tells Glasgow's *Sunday Mail* excitedly: "I have heard enough from people who have been cured to make me believe that miracles are taking place."

St Mary's in Haddington, East Lothian, is of course the Maitland family chapel. It was restored by Olga's grumpy Episcopalian father, the 17th Earl of Lauderdale, and there have been reports of the blind seeing and the lame breaking into a brisk trot.

Says Olga: "The main miracle, of course, is that in a land of bigotry people from all churches can come together in a joint service for healing."

Wiping out at a stroke the Tories last few votes in Scotland, Olga is herself living proof of miracles. Last May she had to grovel to the Commons after helping wreck the disabled rights bill, yet only 12 months later she has risen to bless a private measure, the carers (recognition and services) bill, for those who look after the disabled.

HALLO!

CHARMING Paula Yates, the ex-Lady Geldof, has been telling us what a wonderful mother she is to the quaintly named Fifi Trixibelle, 10, Peaches, four, and Pixie, three.

Alas, her much-flaunted adultery with rock person Michael Hutchence seems to have distracted her from her role as the perfect mother, for when the Marquesa climbed into a taxi last week she was treated to a torrent of complaint from the driver.

"That Paula Yates got into my cab with her three brats, who'd just stepped in some dog doo," complained the driver. "But she still let 'em run all over the back seat in their shoes."

So, just an ordinary selfish cow ("Busy working mum", shurely?) after all.

'The Marquesa'

LIBEL NEWS

MIDDLE East International, the fortnightly journal specialising in the region's affairs, is strapped for cash.

That, at least, is the reason given by the magazine for refusing to support its contributor Alan George, who is defending a libel action brought against him by Frank Machon, an unemployed Glaswegian lorry-driver.

Machon, who is well known to journalists, claims to have been a "secret agent" for the British government. At the height of the Iran-Iraq war, if he is to be believed, he was contracted by MI5 to deliver vital pumps to an Iranian-occupied Iraqi oilfield. Apparently both the Iraqis and the Iranians obligingly allowed Machon, at the head of a convoy of 17 trucks, to drive straight across their front lines.

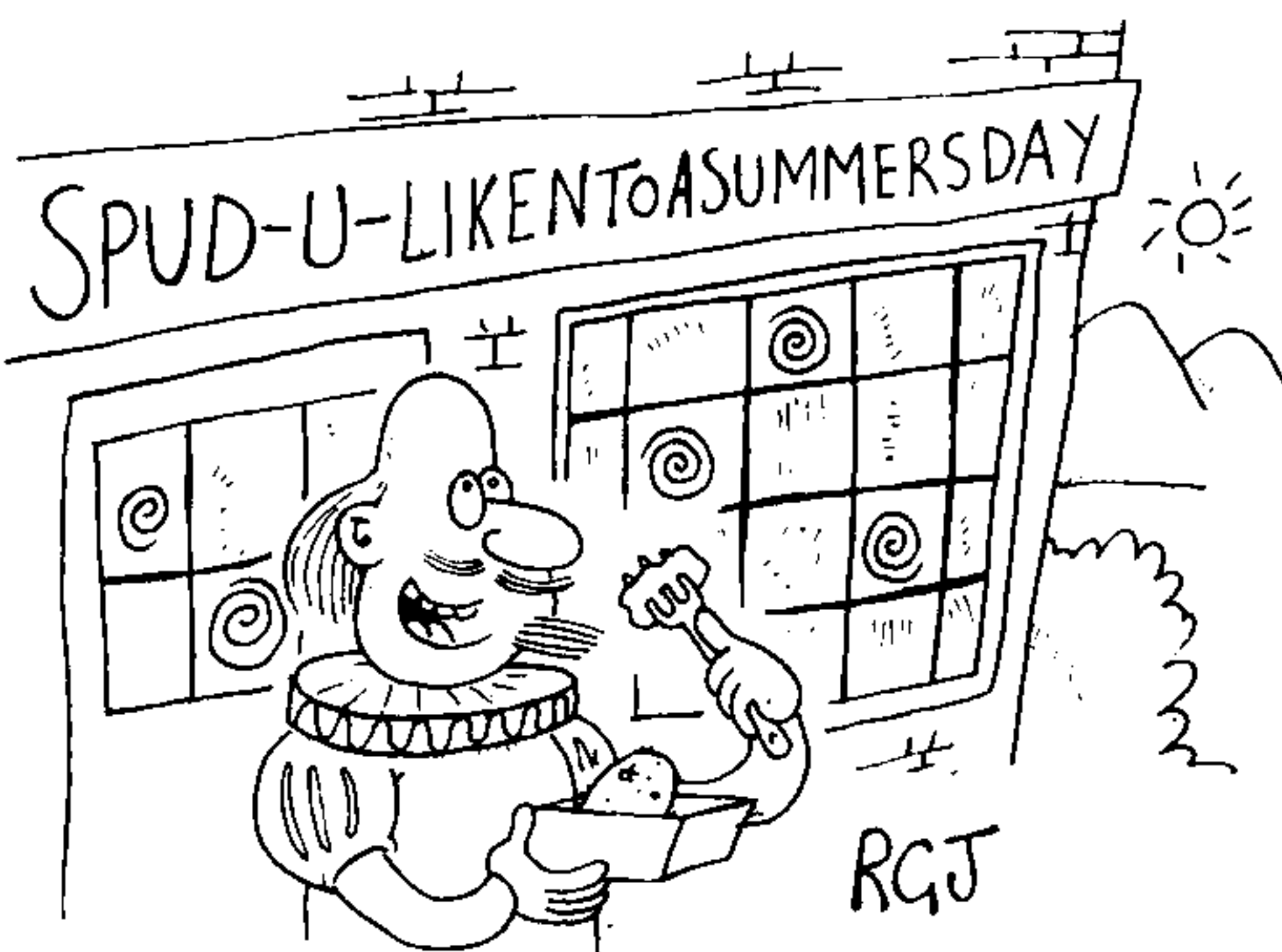
Former *FT* hack Alan Friedman found Machon's tales sufficiently credible to include them in his book *Spider's Web*. It was Alan George's review of this book in *Middle East International* last year that prompted Machon to sue George, the magazine and its editor, Michael Wall. The luminaries who run *MEI* promptly pleaded poverty and left George to conduct his own defence.

This impressive display of loyalty comes from as worthy a group of gents as you could hope to find. The chairman of *MEI*'s board is the former Tory MP Sir Dennis Walters, whose past exploits include soliciting donations for the Conservative party from an Iranian whom he later discovered to be an arms dealer. The vice-chairman is Sir James Craig, a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Also on the board are two ex-ministers, Lord Gilmour and Lord Mayhew, and another ex-ambassador, Sir Harold Beeley.

But perhaps the mag's finances are not quite as dire as has been suggested. In March 1994 — when the board resolved that it couldn't afford to stick up for its contributor — *MEI* had reserves of £422,860. Even more intriguingly, £252,580 was held on the poverty-stricken magazine's behalf by the Geneva-based ANAF Foundation, a conduit for Arab donations to deserving causes in Europe. ANAF's chairman is Sir Dennis Walters, while the honorary president is Lord Mayhew. Also on the board is Sir Harold Beeley.

It's true that *MEI*'s funds have dwindled recently. By March this year the cash reserves were down to £228,602. Still, many magazines would be happy enough to have such a bank balance — especially since *MEI* can usually rely on its chums in the Middle East to make good any shortfall. The Saudi Information Ministry has made several payments of £50,000, and Sir Dennis Walters is even now in the Gulf, collecting further donations from sheikhs.

Meanwhile Judge Previte has stayed Machon's action against George until the Glaswegian reveals his true address and pays £10,000 into court as a security against costs. But the cases against *MEI* and its equally defenceless editor continue — at potentially enormous cost to both.



CURSE OF GNOME

LIVERPOOL FC manager Roy Evans won substantial damages from Lord Gnome in the high court along with three other plaintiffs, Messrs Dooley, Williams and King, following an article about a planned rubbish tip at Kirkby.

Now that the damages have, quite rightly, been paid to these gentlemen, Lord Gnome feels it his duty to report that the planned rubbish tip, which Evans, Dooley and Williams were hoping to introduce to the area for the benefit of the local population, has been rejected. Unanimously.



BACKBENCH gravytrainers were deeply impressed with the number of media appearance fees clocked up by Altrincham MP Sir Fergus Montgomery on the day that the Nolan report was published.

Almost every BBC radio and TV news programme was treated to pious words from "Fergie" on the enormous benefits to the public of moonlighting by MPs.

As the *Eye's* Man Of The Week put it firmly on Radio Four's *The World At One*: "I can see nothing wrong as long as MPs declare their interests before speaking." Sadly, in all the excitement there wasn't time for Fergie to declare his own interests before speaking on the subject of MPs' second (and third, etc) jobs.

Fergie is of course a paid director of TV production company Messenger, as well as Clos-O-Mat Ltd, a lavatory manufacturer. He is also a paid parliamentary adviser to both the National Association of Bookmakers and National Breakdown.

As if that were not enough to supplement his meagre £34,000 parliamentary salary, Fergie also has his snout in the trough at Welbeck Public Relations, a fat bung he looks set to lose if Nolan has his way and MPs are forced to spend more time with their constituents!

HARTLEY BOOTH, the poetic Tory MP for Finchley, has been ticked off by his local police superintendent over the behaviour of local party activists.

The highly religious member, who has kept a low profile since the Emily Barr debacle, was warned by police after Tory workers sent out a leaflet mentioning local Labour councillor Kitty Lyons. It complained about a council-sponsored circus and gave Ms Lyons's phone number, encouraging angry residents to phone her. It then disclosed that she was away on holiday, which the police pointed out could have been seen as an open invitation to burglars.

Booth was duly warned to keep his members under control.

THE sword of truth, rarely in its scabbard these days, now points at Gordon Brown, Labour's shadow chancellor. He faces a libel writ over an article he wrote in the *Daily Record*, the Mirror Group's northern flagship, in February.

Brown tells the Commons his views are all based on "facts, facts, facts"; but a Bath businessman called Owen Inskip begs to differ.

Mr Inskip, whose company Johnson Fry Ltd is bidding to take over housing management from local authorities, says he was libelled in Brown's page one piece. He claims it made him and his colleagues appear to be "greedy millionaires".

Almost certainly there has been a misunderstanding: in Tony Blair's New Labour party, "greedy millionaire" is a term of endearment.

THE impressive Arab connections of Jonathan Aitken, Tory MP for Thanet South, are very useful in his job as minister for defence procurement.

However John Major had Ivan Lawrence, the MP for Burton, picked out for the ministry of defence post after his election victory in 1992. The *Sunday Telegraph* of 26 April 1992 wrote that Lawrence was "asked to be available to go to Downing Street on the following Monday — the day of the junior ministerial reshuffle. But the final call never came." The paper reported that the prime minister had sent a personal letter of regret to Lawrence about the incident.

Could Major's change of heart have come about when the Arab lobby realised that Lawrence was Jewish? Malcolm Rifkind, the MP given the job of defence minister, was also Jewish, and two friends of Israel may have been more than the Arab lobby could stomach. Whatever the reason, Aitken was given the post of minister of state for defence procurement. And Lawrence? He got a consolatory knighthood in the next honours list.

'Backbiter'

NUCLEAR NEWS

TRUE to form, the nuclear industry is offering another Faustian bargain: twenty quid off electric bills in return for a legacy to one's children and grandchildren of stacks of radioactive waste and mountainous heaps of crumbling concrete that form a sarcophagus around what were once power stations.

But don't worry: the problems won't arise until after the election.

At a stroke the government has demolished the claim that privatisation increases competition. Its announcement that Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear will merge means that it is actually reducing the diversity of the market. Why?

Had the government left Scottish Nuclear as a separate company, it might have been able to sell the idea to the Scots: their country would march on the world stage as a nuclear power and that would put the Scottish Nationalists on the spot. Instead, it is the seven Scottish Tory MPs who are desperate to find a way to support the government in what will be a difficult vote without alienating their last stronghold in Scotland.

This should be the moment for the electricity regulator Stephen Littlechild to step forward and refer the deal to the monopolies commission, which would bring the whole deal to a shuddering halt. But he is planning to do no such thing. He loves privatisation even more than he loves competition, and his own proposal was that Nuclear Electric should give two of its power stations to Scotland to create a 4:4 competition between two competitors. Instead it is to be 8:0. The most that mouse-like Littlechild has said is that he is "disappointed".

Michael Heseltine's merger move does explain one puzzling action of the two nuclear companies. Both Scottish Nuclear and Nuclear Electric had decided not to send spent fuel rods to Sellafield for reprocessing because they had discovered that it was cheaper (and safer) to keep them on site in dry storage. But in March Scottish Nuclear reversed the decision and Nuclear Electric followed a month later. Now we can see why: dry storage would indeed be cheaper but it would be a problem for the privatised company in 50 years' time. Instead it will be a problem for the (still nationalised) British Nuclear Fuels. The private market and its shareholders will be saved and the taxpayer will have to bear the burden of storage, plant de-commissioning and disposal of waste.

Meanwhile, potential investors should be very wary of the claims that will be made in the privatisation prospectuses. The industry has based much of its claim to being viable on the argument that it has built Sizewell B "to cost and to time". This is a new myth that is being created. Sizewell B was officially "opened" by Lord Wakeham, the former energy secretary, on 31 January 1995. It was Wakeham himself who had said, four years earlier on 14 June 1991, that Sizewell would be generating "in mid-1994." So it was nine months late on Wakeham's own reckoning. But even the late "opening" was ahead of reality: Tim Eggar, the present energy minister, said it would build up to "full commercial load in the coming weeks". That was 14 weeks ago and it has still not achieved it.

The original cost estimate was £1,147 million. It has ended up at £2,030 million, roughly a billion over target. The government allowed it to change its accountancy system and write off £199 million, which the public must pay; and the estimate was changed four times during construction. Dr Gordon MacKerron, of the science policy research unit at Sussex university, has concluded that the real cost, taking account of inflation, is 40 percent over estimate, and that it might fetch less than £500 million. That's nuclear statistics for you...

SIGNAL FAILURES

TRAVELLERS at Richmond station in south-west London were treated to the following announcement on Saturday 6 May:

At present we have no trains on the North London line or the District Line due to a track failure in the Richmond area, which means the exact train locations are not known! Please note:-

This station is operated by South West Trains and we have nothing whatsoever to do with this problem which is totally out of our control. We can expect trains to be disrupted for up to an hour! Tickets will be accepted on trains to Waterloo (a



"Things could be worse..."

long way from North London though).

Please be patient with the staff on this station as they are employed by South West Trains, not North London Line or London Underground.

'Dr B. Ching'

UN NEWS

AFTER months of quietly watching the ethnic cleansing and shelling of civilians by the Serbs, the United Nations suddenly woke up and reacted fiercely to the Croat takeover of Western Slavonia.

UNPROFOR spokesmen, previously quick to ascribe the Serb massacre of Bosnians to things like, er, mass suicide, denounced the atrocities they alleged that President Franjo Tudjman's Croats had committed. What atrocities? In fact, no one seemed to have the slightest evidence of any serious mayhem, and all independent observers and journalists who entered the enclave noted that the Croats had behaved punctiliously. (This has by no means always been the case with Tudjman's merry men, but when it was mostly Bosnians in Mostar being killed, UNPROFOR was fairly muted in its response.)

In fact British diplomats were rather blasé about the Croat attack until Sir David Hannay, our man at the UN, popped up to demand a UN security council statement against the Croats. Why? One clue could be the entry of Lord Death into proceedings.

The retired former head of the SDP had been working the phone to the foreign office and the UK mission to the UN giving his own idiosyncratic views. When the EU tires of his arrogance, the Serbs will doubtless arrange a speaking tour for him as they did for Canadian UNPROFOR commander General Lewis Mackenzie.

In fact the takeover of Western Slavonia, far from threatening to widen the war was clearly a carve-up between the two most unscrupulous presidents in the region: Croat Franjo Tudjman and Serb Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic has fallen out with hardline Milan Martić, leader of the Serb statelet in Croatia, and would welcome this way to discipline him. Both he and Tudjman wanted the Belgrade-Zagreb highway open, and Martić's men in Western Slavonia had just closed it by shooting randomly at passing civilians (sounds familiar?)

For his part Tudjman wanted progress in getting his refugees and hardliners off his back since renaming UNPROFOR as UNCRO had not been quite as good a victory as they thought. Both probably relied on the stupidity of Martić to do what he did — rocket civilians in Zagreb, which garnered support for Tudjman — who may or may not face an election soon. It also helped that Martić's prime minister and rival, a moderate by local standards, was visiting Zagreb at the time.

The only question is: what is Milosevic's price? He and Tudjman agreed a carve-up of Bosnia at the beginning of the war there, but he may be content to be left with the Serb-occupied Croatian oil wells on the border with Serbia in Eastern Slavonia. Whatever he does, Lord Death and his friends in the UN can be counted on to cheer.

NOOKS and CORNERS

ONE place where a beacon was *not* lit on VE Day was Toys Hill in Kent — not far from Westerham and Chartwell, Churchill's vulgar house.

Beacons have been lit on this vantage point in the past, but now the owner of the land — the National Trust — is anxious that nothing should mar a beautiful area of heath and woodland acquired very soon after its foundation in 1895.

Part of it is a site of special scientific interest, and another part is named after Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the trust, who loved this place and who lived and is buried nearby at Crockham Hill. So the trust has consistently refused permission for memorial seats to be put here, and tenants and leaseholders of trust properties are not even allowed to put up an outside washing line, let alone allow the wretched 20th century to intrude by putting up an outside TV aerial.

Odd, then, that in its centenary year the National Trust has applied to Sevenoaks district council for planning permission to erect a radio mast on top of the old water tower on Toys Hill. This will be a 41-ft high column enlivened with receiving dishes and topped by a 10-ft mast. I cannot illustrate this: perhaps it will be an exciting "High Tec" design in the manner of Sir Richard Rogers, perhaps not; but that is scarcely the point.

Nor do I know whether this erection is required by the police to assist in their aim of total surveillance of all British citizens or by Rupert Murdoch to further to propagate his drivel and take over the British communications industry. That is not the point either. Nor is the fact that the Kent and East Sussex region of the National Trust does not know what to do with the water tower and that the radio mast will bring in a useful income. The trust claims this erection will somehow be "hidden" but that, again, is not really the point.

The real issue is that England's largest landowner, the National Trust, basks in public approval by banning TV aerials while itself taking money to put up a socking great radio mast on the top of a protected hill in Kent in its centenary year. Either

this reflects massive stupidity or it is a piece of shabby hypocrisy.

The trust has become much more responsible and open in recent years since the days when its creepy chairman Lord Gibson could kowtow before the government and happily give away "inalienable" land at Bradenham to allow the RAF to build a

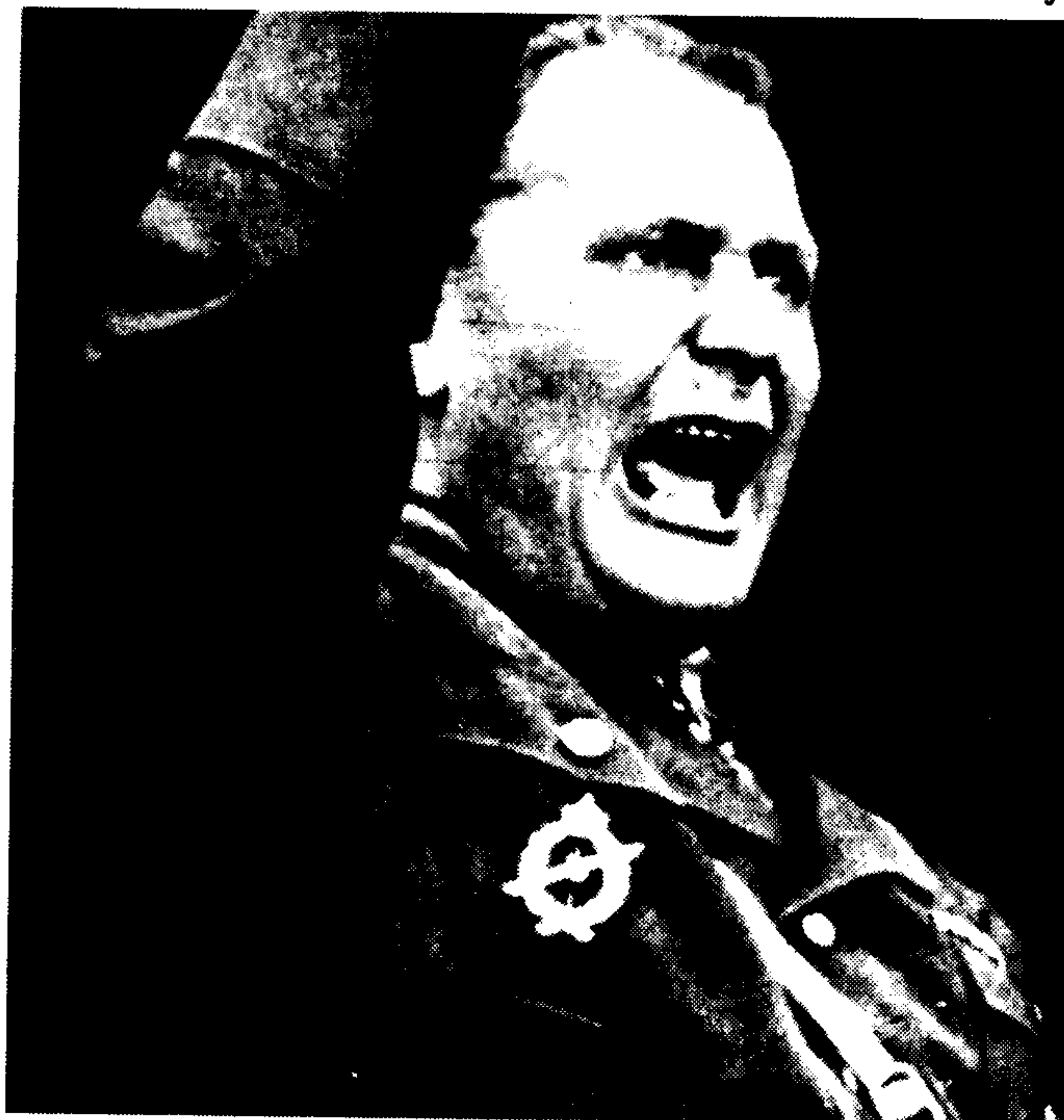
for good. I refer, of course, to Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering. Without him and his team, the town and country planning acts of 1944 and 1947 which established our statutory system of listing historic buildings would surely never have been so effective.

Before the second world war, no building erected after 1714 was officially regarded as being of any artistic or historical merit, so there was nothing to stop the finest pieces of Georgian London being cleared away for redevelopment. The crown commissioners seriously proposed the demolition of Nash's Carlton House Terrace; the London county council destroyed Waterloo Bridge, which Canova thought the most beautiful in Europe; Lord Ellesmere destroyed the Adam brothers' Adelphi; Devonshire House and Chesterfield House and the Foundling Hospital disappeared, and the Bishop of London did his bit by demolishing All Hallows', Lombard Street, by Sir Christopher Wren — in 1938! Had he waited a couple of years the Luftwaffe would have done his dirty work for him.

But when it was German bombs rather than the Church of England, the crown commissioners, the local authority or just irresistible market forces which destroyed famous landmarks and works of art... well, this time it was just barbarism, just what you expect from wicked Nazis. So, largely thanks to Goering, the British began to cherish Wren churches and Georgian terraces and become anxious for their survival. Hence the listing system.

Half a century on we have Stephen Dorrell, heritage minister, together with the rest of Mr Major's pack of ideologues, plotting the privatisation of English Heritage and the undermining of our historic building legislation to open it up to market forces while they posture and prate and attempt to shine in false reflected glory as VE Day is celebrated. Perhaps they should ponder the significance of this historical truth.

'Pilot'



Herman Goering, vote of thanks?

bunker. So we must hope that this is just an unfortunate lapse and the planning application will be withdrawn.

THINKING of VE Day, I am sorry so little tribute has been paid to that great patron of the arts who did so much to save the historic buildings of Britain and who, had he moved into Burleigh House as intended, might have been such a force

de LITTLE — On Feb. 10, to JOANNA (Thurston-Hopkins) and RODNEY de LITTLE, a daughter (Cressida Dandelion Alike Britannia St George), a sister for Lettice.

Daily Telegraph

According to Jane Webb, research director of new product development at Coca-Cola UK, Fruitopia is "a brand with a very overt philosophy: enlightening, light-hearted, witty, always idealistic but never takes itself too seriously".

Independent

Class Teacher

The Governors seek to appoint a permanent, full-time teacher to work, initially, with Key Stage 2.

The successful candidate will be committed to equal opportunity, anti-racism and gender issues.

An interest in science and/or Maths and/or Design and Technology would be welcome but not essential.

To ensure equal opportunity, visits to the school are not encouraged. Shortlisted colleagues will visit the school prior to interview. The sex, age or marital status of candidates is of no relevance. Would colleagues therefore refrain from identifying first names, birth date or title in applications.

Advertisement for Hillocks Primary & Nursery School

Pseud's Corner



"I chose wallpaper because of its status as something extremely incongruous, particularly in the world of art," says [David] Bowie. "I haven't completely lost my sense of irony, you know! I suppose I'm midway between high art and low art — I'm a mid-art populist and postmodernist Buddhist who is casually surfing his way through the chaos of the late 20th century."

Sunday Times

I have enjoyed the serenity and geometrical simplicity of Juan Sanchez Cotan's paintings of suspended vegetables at the National Gallery and the disruptive intimacy of Tracey Emin's tent installed in the middle of the South London Gallery's parquet floor.

JUDITH GODDARD
Daily Telegraph

PIERRE GUYOTAT SEMINAL TEXTS

'THERE IS SOMETHING INSIDE ME THAT MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR ME TO GO FURTHER, ALWAYS FURTHER INTO ABERRATION'

Revered and reviled in his native France, the raw physicality and pornographic excess of Guyotat's writings have provoked comparisons with de Sade, Artaud and Genet. From childhood he has masturbated while writing, and his manuscripts are intense coagulations of ink, semen, dirt and blood. Briefly in London for the exhibition of his manuscripts at the Cabinet Gallery, he reads from *Eden, Eden, Eden* (Creation Press), a meditation on his hero Wazzag's ever-intensifying sex acts. He is joined by writer and lecturer at Sussex University, STEPHEN BARBER.

WITH THANKS TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY AND FRENCH INSTITUTE

Advertisement — ICA Talks

Contributors: M. Bell, M. Carlson, R. Randall, Everyone, T. Hannaford, R. Wallace.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Watch This Space (C4)

Small Talk (BBC1)

IT IS A sad fact of modern culture that almost all newspaper stories now contain a breathless reference to the Internet, some kind of souped-up computer network on which techno-anoraks converse with similar obsessives around the world.

Sex on the Internet... Hurley Signs Up To Internet... Major denies Rift With Internet... Like Woody Allen's *Zelig*, the Internet turns up everywhere. Internet to revolutionise TV Access, read one recent story.

The idea was that the geeks at the keyboard would be able to tap out comments on live programmes as they were watching them and "upload" them directly to the presenter's terminal. *Westminster On Line* — the new marmalade slot political show — was proudly billed as the "first TV show with Internet access". Now Channel 4's new youth series *Watch This Space* comes along, gushing in *Radio Times*: "A new, interactive youth magazine... To take part, log onto the *Watch This Space* web site: <http://worldserver.pipex.com/wts...>"

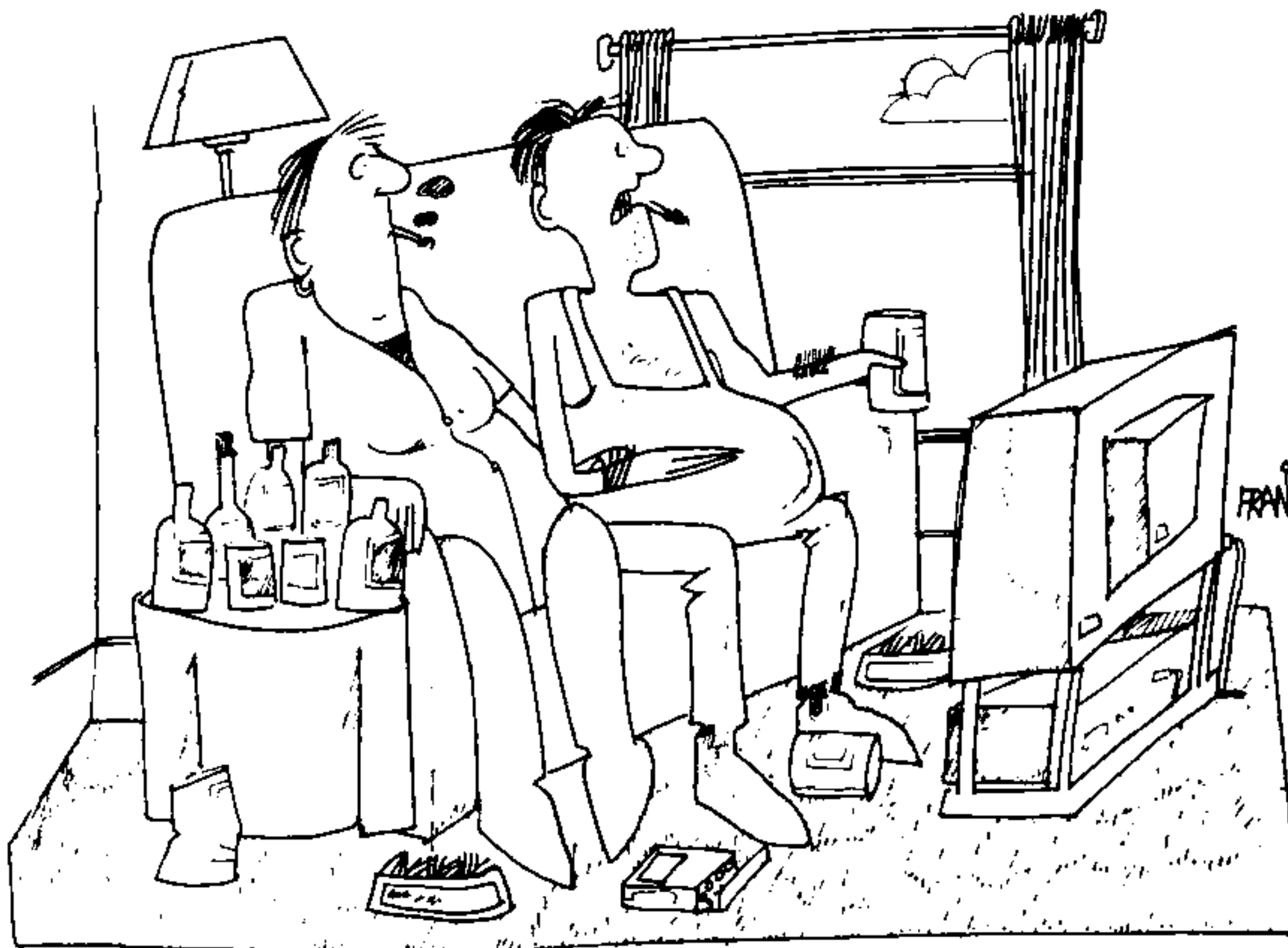
The problem is — entirely typical of Internet fever — that programmes in which viewers are able to give their opinions directly to the presenters of live programmes have been around for at least 30 years. They are called phone-ins. Also, phone calls to a TV studio may not be very visually exciting, but they are a damn sight more so than a few scratchy lines of type winged from someone's terminal to the *Watch This Space* web site.

Of course what the techno-anoraks inside and outside television really wanted was a free access slot, with the TV set as the recipient web site. But television is not allowed to surrender editorial control, in case of libel or propaganda or obscenity being typed in, so the geeks' contributions are sifted in advance by the producer. In effect the presenter — on both *Westminster On Line* and *Watch This Space* — ends up no more hi-tech than the best man at a wedding, reading out the telegrams.

Realising this, *Watch This Space* has adopted every other possible angle on access television. The presenters were voted in by viewers during a pilot show a few weeks ago and can apparently be voted off, although, interestingly, the line-up democratically arrived at is exactly what you

children's television in that its contributors are tinies, although it is not really intended for children to watch. The audience, if it is going to have one, will, you assume, be grandparents.

Small Talk is a sort of small-screen version of the popular *Reader's Digest* feature "The Things They Say", which features the verbal cuteness of the small. A panel of nine children — posed in a "video wall" nicked from the *Celebrity Squares* chessboard-set — has been asked a set of questions in advance. The three adult contestants have to guess whether, for example, they would know to answer to "What is a physiotherapist?" and "What is a piccolo?" Having read in the papers about collapsing editorial standards, the contestants tend to gamble that none of the kids will know the



"Don't you just love these long summer evenings?"

might expect a Yoof TV executive to come up with through the usual tyrannical recruitment: a ditzy blonde, a cool, black dude, an arrogant toff who will be the one everyone picks on and hates. The features for next week are chosen by the viewers, though, again, from a selection offered by the producer.

Posing as a blank space, the show is actually a multiple choice paper. In fact, amazingly, what it most resembles is that old kiddies holiday show *Why Don't You Just Turn Off Your Television Set And Go And Do Something Less Boring Instead?*, very slightly remodelled for the East 17 generation.

Small Talk, the new BBC1 Sunday night show, is a kind of

answer to anything and what tension there is comes from their occasionally being surprised by a flash of knowledge.

The only really funny thing about *Small Talk* is that its presenter is Ronnie Corbett. Hollywood was famous for what was known as "horizontal casting" in which the actress would have to lie down next to the director. Corbett is the victim of the more innocent eccentricity of "vertical casting", hired for his height to chime with the title and the subject.

'Square Eyes'

the Disney classic, *101 Pulp Fiction* (18) will continue.

South Manchester Reporter

MEDIA NEWS

EVERYONE enjoyed the contest between Will Carling and the flatulent bosses of the Rugby Football Union, but most spectators were so busy watching the scrumage they took their eye off the ball.

Behind the insults and fart-jokes was a more serious issue: the power struggle between rugby union administrators, who want the game to retain some vestige of amateur status; and the commercial interests which are itching to cash in on it.

Of those commercial interests none is more powerful — or more itchy — than the Dirty Digger. Having muscled in on rugby league (not to mention Premiership football, heavyweight boxing, etc, etc), he now dreams of creating an international "super-league" of professional rugby union players to entice yet more viewers to invest in BSkyB satellite dishes.

It is no surprise, then, that Murdoch's lackeys were at the forefront of the campaign to discredit the RFU — though they neglected to mention their boss's financial interest. "THE SUN PUTS WIND UP OLD FARTS," a front-page headline from Wapping boasted on 8 May, revealing that RFU president Dennis Easby had agreed to meet Will Carling "after a day of pressure led by the Sun".

What started all the fuss, of course, was Channel 4's programme *Fair Game*, which included Carling's "old farts" comment (without his permission) as part of its hatchet-job on the RFU. The show's presenter was Greg Dyke. By an amazing coincidence Greg Dyke is also chief executive of Pearson Television, which owns a large stake in... BSkyB!

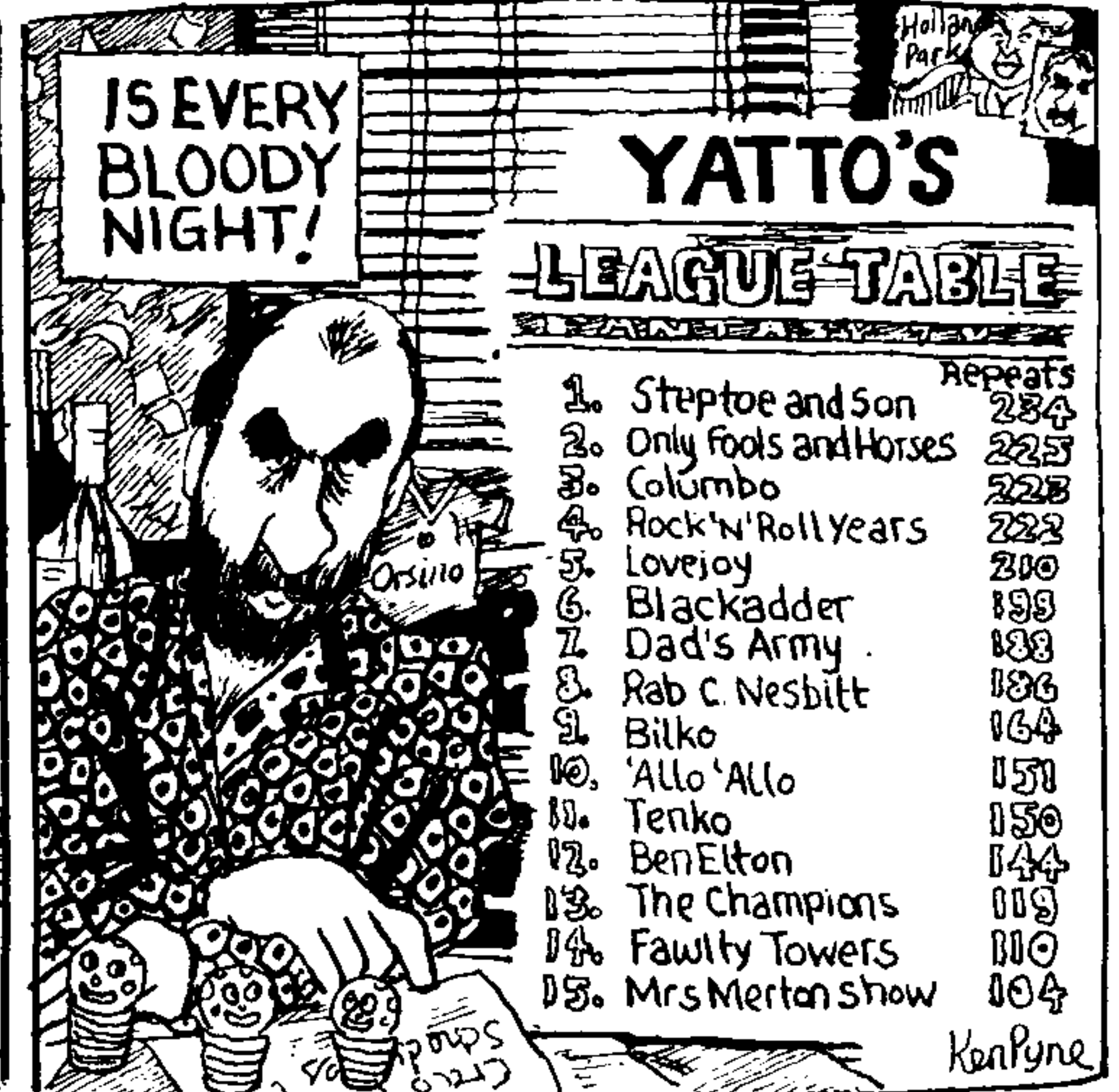
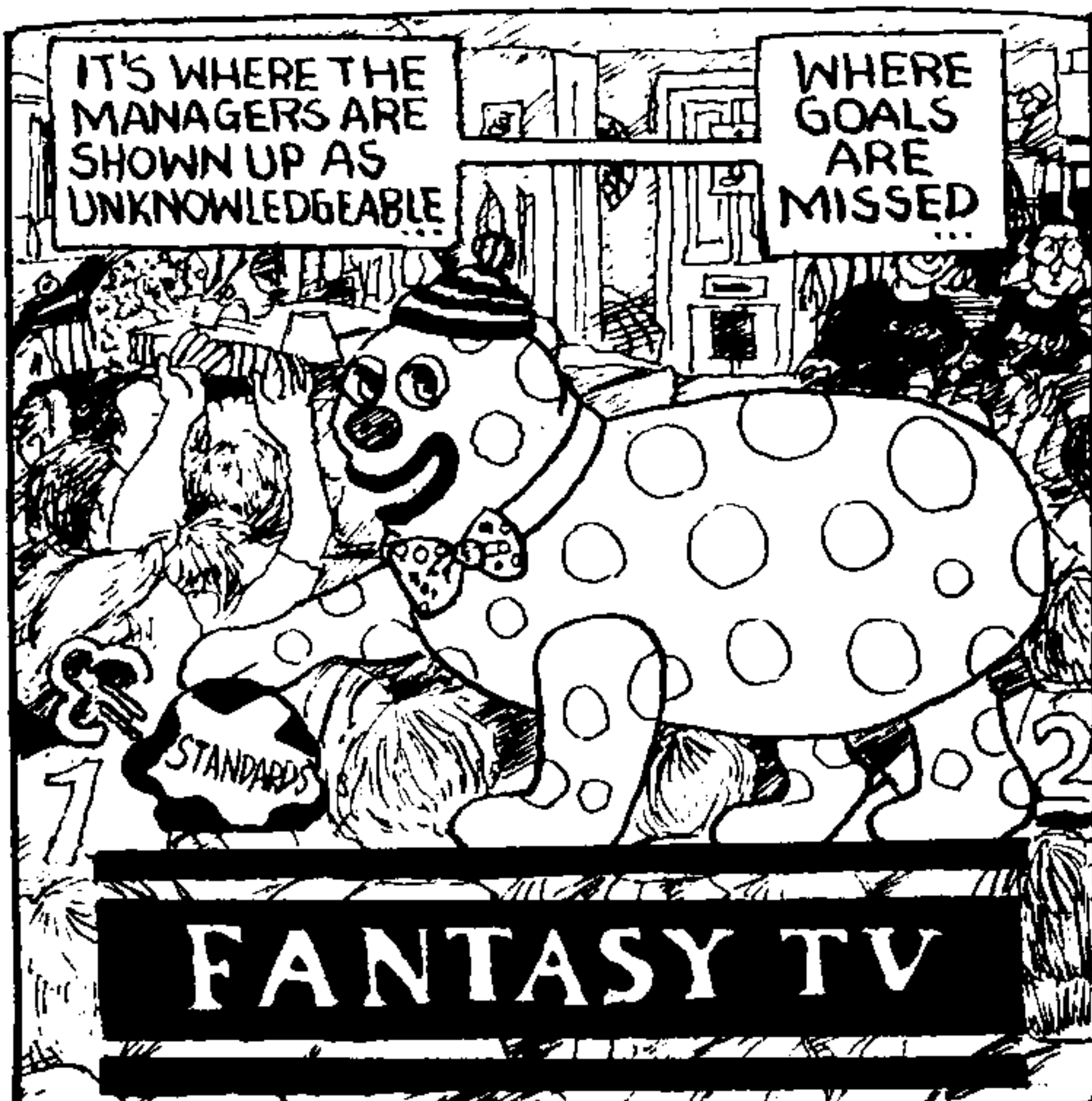
WHAT lies behind the decision of Rupert Murdoch's New Century Television consortium to bid just £2 million to run the new Channel 5? The decision has stunned terrestrial TV stations.

New Century, which included BSkyB, Granada and Polygram, had been expected to make a massive bid to compete with Virgin TV, Pearson's C5B and UKTV. But when the bids arrived at the Independent Television Commission, Murdoch's bid was completely dwarfed (UKTV bid most at more than £36 million).

BSkyB's last bid for an ITC licence ended in embarrassing failure after its emissary got stuck in traffic and missed the deadline by six minutes. But this time it was the government that appears to have scuppered BSkyB's chances.

Murdoch was approached directly by Downing Street shortly before the deadline. He was warned that if he won the bid it could wreck the government's plans for new rules on media ownership. The plans mean that ownership of more than 15 percent of the media cake would be prohibited, effectively allowing Murdoch to escape any prohibitive government action. But if his consortium won the Channel 5 bid it would have tipped the balance and forced the government to investigate Murdoch.

When the Digger heard this he sent henchman Sam Chisholm, the Sky chief, to a New Century consortium meeting where the news of the new £2 million bid was greeted in stunned silence.



POPULAR TV SHOW RETURNS



THE multitude who gathered for this year's James Cameron memorial lecture at the City University's school of journalism listened to a most moving speech by Jeremy Isaacs on the role of the media in telling the unpalatable truth.

Fortunately no one was ill-mannered enough to mention Ken Loach's series of documentaries, *Questions of Leadership*, commissioned by Channel 4 in 1983, which attempted to tell the unpalatable truth about how trade union leaders had betrayed their members. The series was censored — completely suppressed, in fact — by the then head of Channel 4, one Jeremy Isaacs.

Adding to the irony of the occasion, one of the judges for the James Cameron award turned out to be that warrior for truth, Sandy "Friend of MI6" Gall. In his book *News From the Front*, Gall recalls how he persuaded the late General Zia of Pakistan to provide a SAM-7 missile for the mujahideen fighters whom he and an ITN crew were accompanying into Afghanistan.

"Not only would a kill have made superb television," he explains, "it would have done wonders for the mujahideen in their uphill struggle against the might of a superpower." What a splendid example to set to City University's budding hacks!

NO WONDER Richard Littlejohn's *Live and Uncut* ITV show was enlivened by anti-motorway protesters who took over the stage on 5 May after a "discussion" on direct action.

Earlier, production staff had trawled the squats of east London promising "as much free beer as you can drink in an hour before the programme" to round up enough bodies to ensure a confrontation (*'An intelligent debate', shurely?*)

WORLD OF HYPE

NEXT weekend the usual spoilt hacks on the personal finance circuit will be flown to Guernsey by the Co-op Bank. "As always," says Co-op PR supremo David Smith, "the main objective of the trip will be to have fun." There will be a car treasure hunt, a flight to Alderney and accommodation in the top-rated Government House.

But there will be one small bit of business amid the pleasure. "The Co-op Bank believes it is important that personal finance journalists see at first hand the location of its offshore investments," Smith explains.

Offshore? Does the ever-so-ethical Co-op Bank have a special operation hidden away on the tax-dodging isle of Guernsey? Yes indeed. But in return for their fun freebie, the hacks can be relied upon not to ask any embarrassing questions.

Meanwhile, finance hacks are still recovering from last month's two-day freebie to Amsterdam, courtesy of another great institution, Barclays Bank. Led by jovial Barclays PR boss Nick Cobham and his Romford-born sidekick Chris Tucker, Fleet Street's finest were taken to one of those Amsterdam establishments where exotic substances — of the sort controlled in the UK by the Dangerous Drugs Act — are openly on sale.

We trust that, like Bill Clinton, they did not inhale.

HACKWATCH: ANDREW NEILL

"WHATEVER next for editor Neill?" asked Sir John Junor in the *Mail on Sunday* on 20 November last year, after Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill's parting of the ways with Rupert Murdoch. "He tells us that he plans to write a book and also a column... I should not think the latter will last long. If it is as bad as his last one, it will be unreadable."

Whoops! Four days later it was revealed that he would indeed be writing a column — for the *Daily Mail*. "Starting in January," the *Mail* announced, "his weekly column, a provocative mix of politics and current affairs, will become required reading." Laddling on the adjectives, it also described him as "trenchant", "outspoken" and "perceptive".

Well, the column duly started in January. But has it become required reading? Alas, no.

19 January: With *Mail* readers in a frenzy of anticipation, the star of the show at last appears, boldly warning them that he is against "the politically correct spirit of our times". The sight of Hugh Grant's grinning face reminds him of "Neill's first law of film stars: stay away from them — they always turn out to be a lot less interesting and a lot less smart than the folk they portray on screen".

26 January: Neill is so pleased with his piece on Hugh Grant he inaugurates a regular feature — "Luvvie-Watch". (Where can he have got the idea from?) Today's victim is Pierce Brosnan, the new "politically-correct James Bond". Neill is shocked to learn that in the next 007 film "girls" will be referred to as "ladies". Bond, he argues, ought to be a rogue who "beds the girls... It's a male fantasy with great allure for females." And, presumably, for male ex-editors.

Meanwhile Neill turns to the latest stories about Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles. "I've had my fill of below-stairs revelations about the royals," he thunders. "I now know far more intimate details about them — from the sheets on the bed to grass stains on the royal pyjamas — than I have ever known about the closest members of my own family. Or would want to know." Can this be the same Andrew Neill who spent £250,000 buying serial rights to Andrew Morton's book on Princess Di?

2 February: Time for a sermon on education policy. "I am the product of the sort of quality state school that used to be the pride of this country," he writes. "So are most of my friends. The excellence of our state education has allowed us to scale heights that were previously the preserve of public schools." For proof of Neill's own intellectual "heights" one need look no further than his latest Luvvie-Watch — on Richard Gere, who has apparently reduced Cindy Crawford to tears. "How could he be so cruel?" Neill demands, trenchantly.

9 February: "Good news for Tony Blair this week and it will probably clinch the next election for him: the Labour luvvies are falling out with him." But we shouldn't think that Neill is going soft on Labour. "Forgotten what it was like to live in the strike-ridden Britain of Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan?" he asks. "Then go to France. My flight to Paris this week was delayed for more than an hour because Air France cabin crews had gone on strike..." There's only one slight flaw in Neill's ingeniously anti-socialist broadside: the cabin crews are in fact striking against a right-wing government, led by the Gaullist prime minister Edouard Balladur. Still, with any luck the *Mail*'s readers won't notice.

16 February: The Voice of Controversy daringly tries his hand at a joke, inspired by the news that Paula Yates and Bob Geldof are to separate after 18 years together. "Some may feel that is too long for any one woman to endure Geldof's stubbly face. But that's clearly not her view: she has been seen seeking sympathy in the arms of ageing rocker Michael Hutchence who, in the scruffy stakes, could give Mr Geldof a run for his money." Hilarious! Elsewhere in the column Neill chides Stephen Fry for his "Labour luvvie leanings".

23 February: Luvvies galore this week. Daniel Day-Lewis, who has dumped Isabelle Adjani, is "an old-fashioned bounder". Neill is also angry with Carmen Callil, who has had the temerity to describe *Baywatch*'s Pamela Anderson as "stupid" and "brainless": apparently forgetting Neill's first law of film stars, he insists that gorgeous Pamela should be given "the benefit of the doubt". Finally he notes

that Madonna's career is on the slide. "I fear I'm to blame," he boasts. "Those in the know say she never really recovered from the roasting I gave her during a three-hour interview in her Beverley Hills home three years ago." He fails to notice that his own career has taken an even steeper nosedive since then.

9 March: All the tabloids have been rushing to the defence of PC Richard King, who has been fined £150 for punching a man who threatened his baby. So what line does the Voice of Controversy take? Er, he thinks King's conviction is a "crazy injustice".

16 March: Provocative as ever, Neill takes yet another pot-shot at "Labour luvvies".

30 March: Neill airs his doubts about Jonathan Aitken: "There is a widespread suspicion in political circles that there are potentially embarrassing skeletons in his closet relating to past business contacts, particularly with Arabs..."

6 April: Tony Blair has become an honorary member of the P.G. Wodehouse Society. "He'll be joining the MCC next," Neill quips — thus repeating, verbatim, a joke made by Tim Rice in the *Times* a few days earlier. He also finds space to attack David Hare as "a ludicrous Labour luvvie".

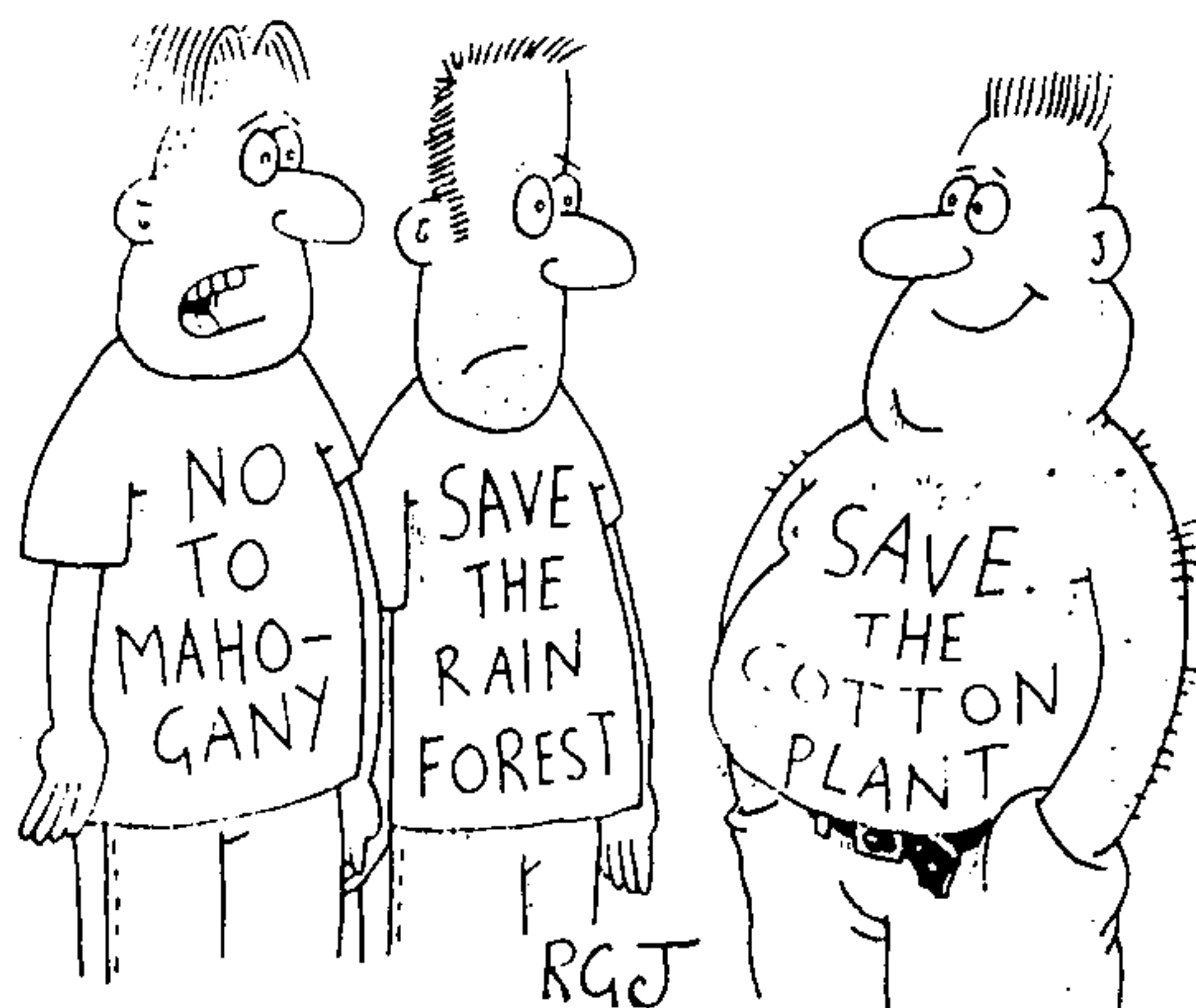
13 April: Jonathan Aitken is suing the *Guardian* over an article on his dealings with Arabs. Overlooking the fact that he himself has referred to the skeletons in Aitken's closet, Neill lambasts the *Grauniad* as a "salacious scandal sheet". Elsewhere Neill expresses his delight "that Tony Blair has taken my advice and dumped all those dreadful Labour luvvies". (*You've already done this one, Brillo — Ed.*)

20 April: Neill is mightily impressed by Betty Boothroyd's escape from a landslide in Morocco. "Betty is our new Lawrence of Arabia," he chortles — repeating a joke made by Tony Banks MP a few days earlier. He also questions Paula Yates' claim that Michael Hutchence is God's gift to women: "Paula Yates' taste in men has always been somewhat suspect." (*You've done this one too — Ed.*) Oh, and he denounces Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Linda Evangelista as brainless bimbos whose joint IQ "is barely into double figures" — just the sort of put-down for which he rebuked Carmen Callil a few weeks ago.

27 April: Yet another blast against Naomi Campbell, who had \$100 bills thrown at her when she stripped naked in a lesbian bar. "Perhaps it's too much to have expected her to pick it up and announce she was sending it to the Oklahoma victims' relief fund — supermodels, after all, live on a different planet from the plain folks of Oklahoma City." Should we assume, then, that Neill has sent his *Daily Mail* fees to the Oklahoma relief fund? He does not say. Instead he attacks the American TV news presenter Connie Chung as an "airhead". Unkind readers may recall that Neill was himself hoping for a career as a TV anchorman in the States, until his show was ignominiously dropped. But it would clearly be absurd to suggest that he is in any way jealous.

11 May: For the first time in five years there are no women in the list of film stars who guarantee box office success. Neill thinks he knows why: today's Hollywood actresses are miserable bimbos who "all take themselves oh so seriously". Unlike our own Andrew "Laughs Aplenty" Neill...

● *The photograph of Andrew Neill that was to have accompanied Hackwatch has been held out due to reasons of taste.*



"Nice tattoo, Dave"

DOING THE ROUNDS

A COMPUTERISED bed-search plan has been launched to try to end the crisis in London's intensive care units. Computerised emergency bed search services are of course nothing new in the capital: they have already failed to solve the shortage of non-intensive care beds.

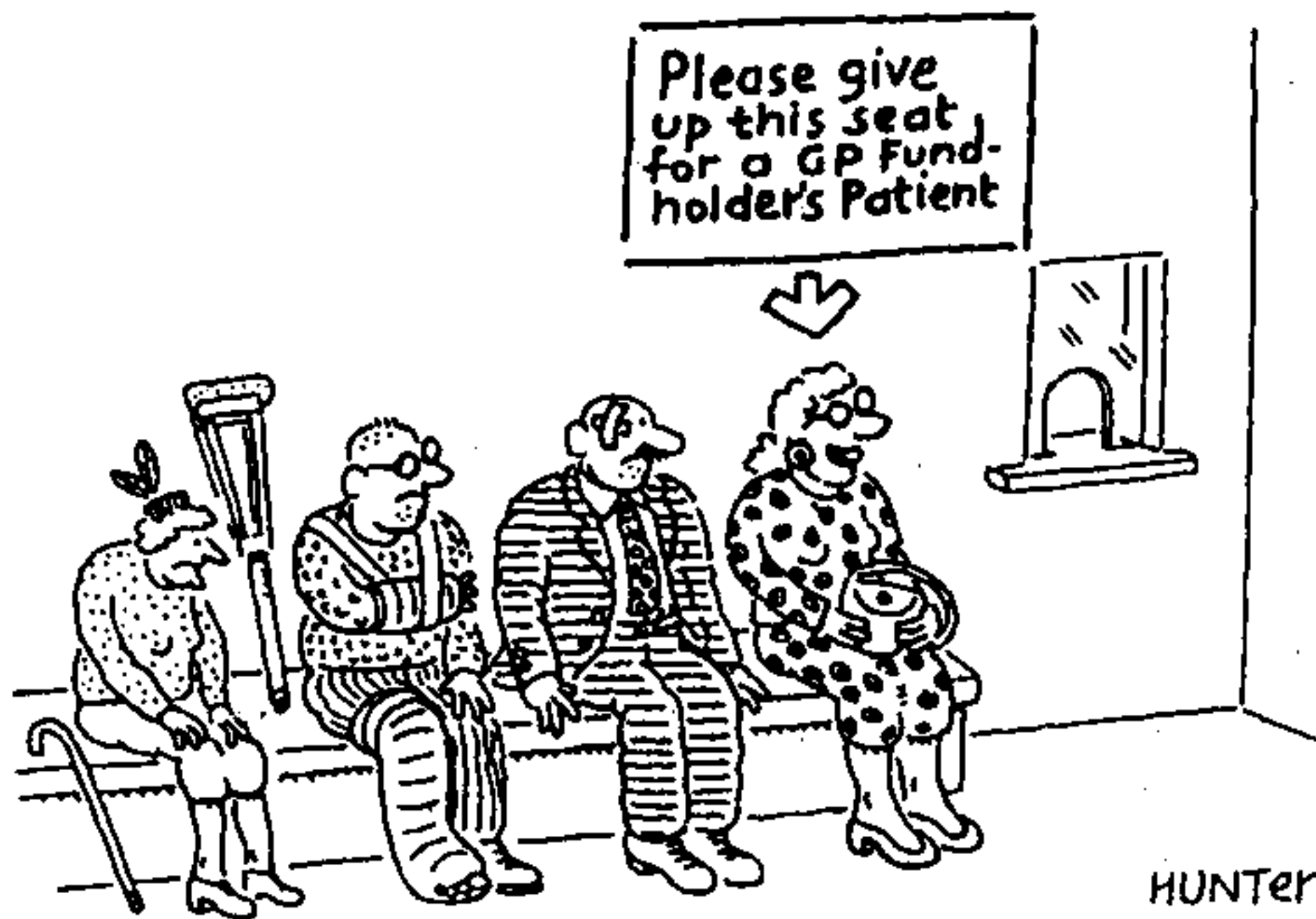
The ITU crisis is not just within the M25 but extends nationwide. In Manchester and Mersey, logging of ITU beds has been in place for many years, as has a policy ensuring that consultants, rather than junior doctors, negotiate occupancy.

Despite this, audit has revealed that patients are still denied admission, transferred within and between hospitals inappropriately, denied regional super-specialist treatment and discharged prematurely. Unless London's computer can conjure up extra beds or the specialist nurses to staff them, little will change.

● "COSTLY and protracted suspensions of a consultant are a thing of the past," NHS chief executive Alan Langlands assured MPs on the public accounts committee inquiry into the ludicrously prolonged and expensive suspension of paediatrician Dr Bridget O'Connell (*Eyes passim*). "I find it hard to imagine a case such as this happening again."

He cannot have looked very hard. Consultant haematologist Dr Helena Daly was suspended then dismissed from the Royal Cornwall hospital trust more than two and a half years ago. Her two-stage appeal took 17 months for the department of health to organise. The second stage was lodged in July 1994 and was due to be heard before February 1995 but because the trust objected to each and every aspect of the procedure, it has been repeatedly deferred. It is now scheduled for this month.

Mr Langland's completely useless new guidelines only ensure that he is told if a suspension isn't resolved within six months. They do not



ensure that the matter will be resolved and nor do they apply to doctors such as Dr Daly, who was suspended before the guidelines were issued, or to those who are under notice of dismissal.

The former chief executive who suspended Dr Daly has admitted that his original action was "inappropriate" but the trust remains happy to delay and defer at public expense, doubtless hoping that Dr Daly and the patients who have campaigned on her behalf will eventually give up.

● NEW GPs continue to be scarce, especially in inner cities (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*).

The Island health centre on London's Isle of Dogs advertised a GP vacancy in 1988 and received 200 applications. Similar advertisements in 1989 and 1990 received 100 and 40 applications respectively. This year the expanding practice announced that it was moving into purpose built £1.8 million premises and advertised for a fourth partner. A massive four applicants fought over the post, and the practice is not optimistic about recruiting a fifth partner in the autumn.

At London Fields purpose built medical centre in Hackney, 80 applicants contested a GP post in 1991. This year, nine doctors applied. Eight were unsuitable and the ninth dropped out. The practice

has now closed its list.

Another dying breed is the casualty senior house officer. There are currently 200 vacancies across the country, with district general hospitals particularly hard hit. Teaching hospitals are still managing to attract SHO's despite the poor working conditions. At Nottingham's Queens hospital trust, SHO's are allocated their holiday dates before they arrive, they have only one completely free weekend in every six and are denied study leave. Two SHO's were recently forbidden to go on an essential trauma and life support course.

At Luton and Dunstable NHS trust, the casualty registrar has to cover orthopaedics as well and recently had to leave a hip operation to deal with an emergency. A case of "keep him asleep, Ill be back in a minute". And at Whipps Cross hospital, managers have tried to placate patients waiting an average seven hours in casualty for treatment by offering free meals. Sandwiches for the sitting and hot dinners for the trolley bound.

● DOZENS of British health authorities and hospitals are entering into the spirit of world peace by investing in the arms industry. General Electric Company, Britain's second largest weapons manufacturer, lists among its shareholders the British Heart Foundation (400,000 shares) and London's St Bartholomew's hospice (200,000), St Thomas' hospital and St George's hospital. GEC helps British Aerospace make the Hawk ground attack aircraft used by Indonesia against the civil population of East Timor, 200,000 of whom have died since 1975.

The biggest health-related arms investor, however, is BUPA, which has 930,000 shares in GEC, 201,600 in Rolls Royce, 165,000 in Lucas, 94,400 in Thorn EMI, 75,375 in Vickers and 65,500 in Racal. As BUPA's ethical investment spokesman David Bryant put it: "The objective is to obtain the best return for our members".

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

UNABLE to suppress it any longer, the health and safety executive (HSE) has finally released a report on the long-term health effects of organophosphate (OP) sheep dips. As was widely expected, it proves that nerve gas-based products do harm their users.

However, the findings are so potentially damaging to a government that licensed OPs as safe that the official propaganda machine has already swung into damage limitation mode.

As the 143 farmers tested showed only minor adverse effects, and the detection required sophisticated tests, HSE "spokesperson" Dr Peter Graham offered the weasel claim that the results "...do not confirm the worst predictions of some people."

Indeed they do not; but Graham is not telling the whole truth. Conveniently he seems to have forgotten that the research excluded sheep dippers who had shown obvious signs of illness. Some, in the pilot survey, were so ill they could not even fill in the forms on which the study conclusions were based.

Having tested only those who had been apparently healthy, an honest conclusion would have

been that *even* those farmers who had shown no obvious signs of adverse effects had been harmed, doubly underlining the dangers of OPs.

Alongside minimising the dangers, the other half of the cover-up is in full swing. The fair Angela "Goldilocks" Browning, junior agriculture minister, is claiming that the dips are perfectly safe to use providing that the correct precautions, like wearing appropriate protective clothing, are taken. To support her Graham has seized on a comment in the report that "protective clothing is seldom worn".

This was strangely absent from early drafts, and refers to work done by Edinburgh scientists in 1993 — not the current study. But this does not stop Graham applying it to the farmers tested in 1994, claiming that many of *them* did not wear protective clothing, even though none of them was observed dipping.

Displaying another curious lapse of memory, Graham fails to mention that the Edinburgh scientists also found that, even when farmers wore the full range of protective clothing they *still* absorbed OP sheep dip. Thus the defence line for government incompetence follows a well-worn path: if in doubt, blame the victims.



ONE of the effects of OP poisoning is clinical depression so severe that its victims are driven to

suicide. Is it a coincidence, then, that there is an epidemic of suicide in the farming community?

Some 526 suicides and undetermined deaths have been reported between 1979 and 1990, putting farming at the top of the suicide league. Is it also a coincidence that the "suicide map" of Great Britain corresponds almost exactly with sheep dipping areas? Can it also be a coincidence that suicide risk is higher in older farmers than in younger groups when the trend in the general population is for younger men to commit suicide — when OP reactions are linked with long-term exposure, which must be age-related?

The department of health believes these factors are coincidental and is confining its research to "rural stress".

To back up the DoH, the ever-compliant NFU, no doubt worried at losing still more of its membership, has weighed in with projects to reduce rural stress and is proudly trumpeting its first award for this work. A project in Shropshire — well known for its sheep rearing — has been "highly commended" for a "Healthy Alliance" award, sponsored jointly by none other than the department of health and sheep dip manufacturers Smith, Kline and Beecham.



ONE of the biggest causes of rural stress is of course officialdom, and it is perhaps surprising that a poultry farmer from Dumfries in Scotland has not so far been driven to suicide.

Last week he was expecting bulldozers to turn up at his farm to prepare a site for a new broiler chicken house but was forced to abandon his plans at very short notice. He received, on the morning work was due to start, a letter from the local planning officer refusing a building permit.

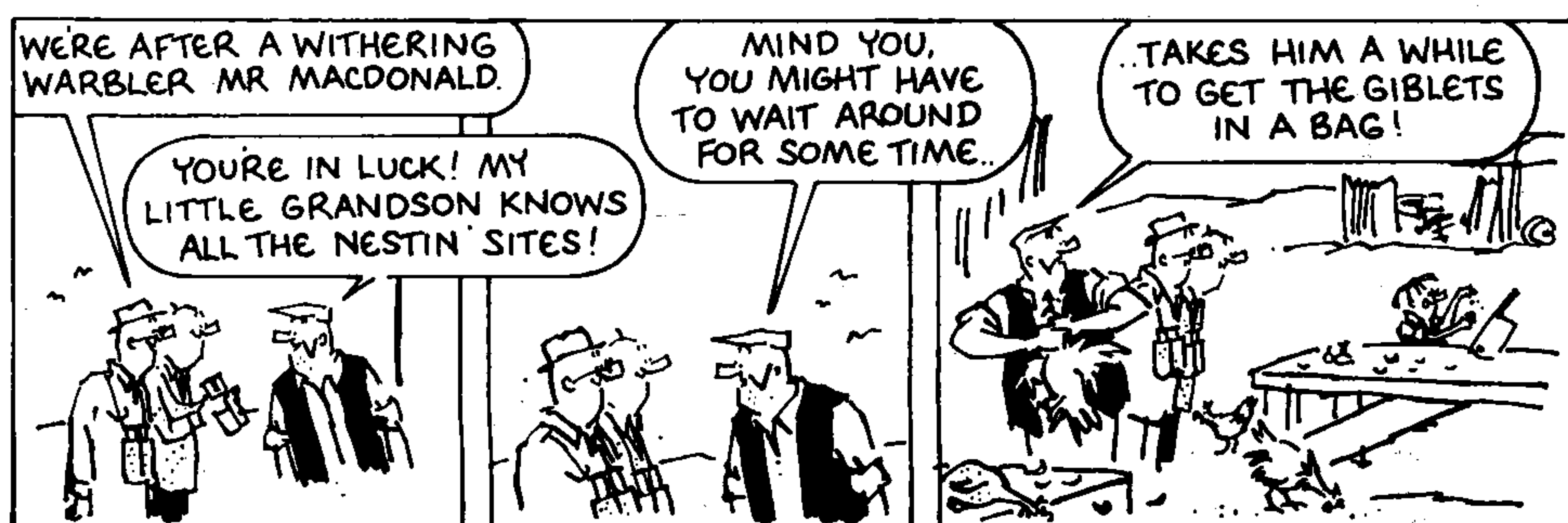
One reason given was that plans for the broiler house did not show access provisions for disabled persons. Another was that the doors opened outwards and might "obstruct the public or even hit members of the public walking by".

Friends in the area suggest that rather than suicide, homicide might be more appropriate.

'New Muckspreader'

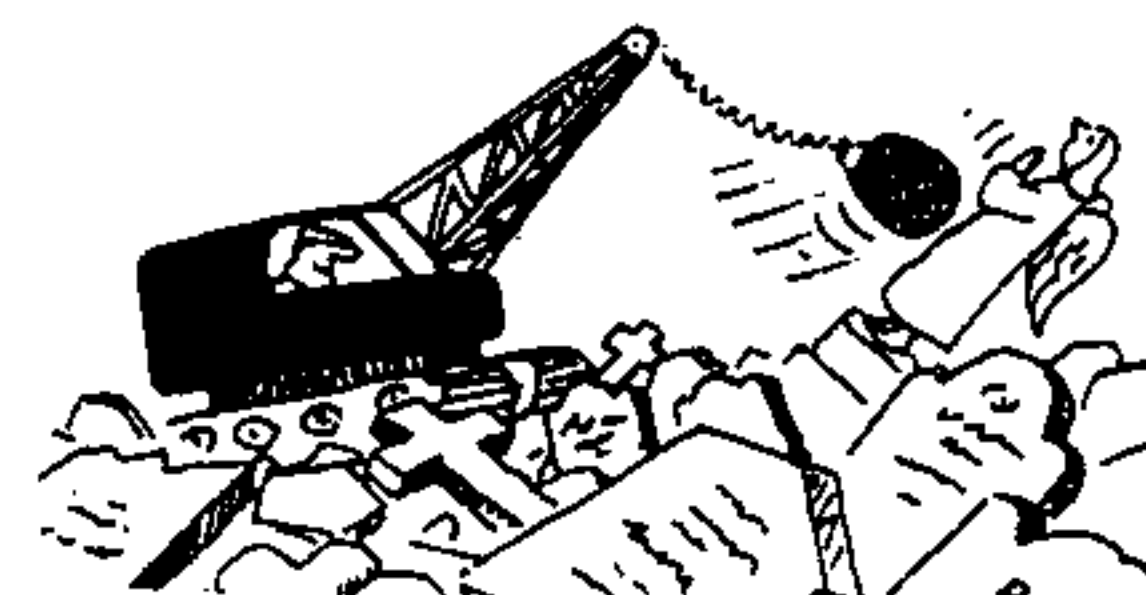
Old Macdonald

ALBERT





THE Rotten Borough Advertiser



THE QUALITY OF MERSEY

WHILE the bullets fly and buildings burn, making parts of Liverpool resemble old Chicago, Merseyside police (the most expensive force in the country) seem unable to do anything about it.

The murder of David Ungi, gunned down by automatic fire on the streets of Toxteth, was followed by the burning down of a "fun pub" called Cheers in Aigburth and the midnight spraying of a row of houses in the south of the city with machine gun fire.

The untraced assassin is thought to have been paid £20,000 for the "hit" on Ungi in what Inspector Knacker believes was a drugs-related execution.

Ungi was a much-loved local judging by the tributes in the *Echo* since his death. Deep sympathy came from a "Mr (Tony) Murray", sent down for 12 years last month for drug dealing. Murray, a kneecapped supergrass with a notorious reputation, is having the £1,000 a month mortgage interest on his luxury home in Cheshire paid by the DSS while inside. When led from the dock Murray uttered the prophetic words: "The fat lady will sing." Also among those sending tributes was Tommy "Tucker" Camerford, a guest at Long Lartin for several years on similar offences.

So far Knacker has failed to feel any collars, but he has reassured the public that tension on the streets is relaxing: no wonder — most of the main suspects have fled abroad.

The police's failure to tackle the multi-million pound drugs problem, which they have known about for several years, is odd given that the latest audit commission report reveals how Merseysiders "enjoy" the most expensive police force in the country (it costs £140 per head).

Merseyside's chief constable, "Sunny" Jim Sharples, has spent large sums on a pseudo-business package from management consultant David Arkle. This involves calling officers "managers" and "directors"; but the new scheme has already proved more costly than the old system. Four superintendents were promoted to chief superintendent 24 hours before reorganisation and given pay increases

of £4,000 each. They went back to their former ranks the following day with no loss of salary.

And while the Cheers pub burns, the country's second most expensive fire service agreed the retirement package of Merseyside assistant fire chief Anthony Butler (*Eye* 857). Number three in the pecking order, 43-year-old Butler gets £100,000 lump sum plus £22,000 a year pension for "depression". Last September he was charged with assaulting his wife and stepchildren, but the charge was later dropped. In October the brigade's medical officer agreed his retirement "under no undue pressure". The package should help alleviate his mental state. But it will do nothing for council taxpayers still taking in the news that the fire authority has spent £130,000 on BMWs, top brass for the use of.

MAJOR-BALLS

SOME of John Major's antics while housing chairman in Lambeth 24 years ago might fool one into believing he was once part of the loony left.

Then he was not a great one for encouraging choice: he denied council tenants the right to paint the outside of their homes, insisting that that was the council's job; and his decision to send housing officers to Poland (no stranger to "grey sullen concrete wastelands") to seek new ideas on social housing was at best bizarre.

But the most poignant legacy must be Mr Major's decision to build Penwith Manor estate, which is now being demolished. Situated in the north of the borough on land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, it has recently been given £18 million of "estate action" money by the government. It will be spent on demolishing the estate's centrepiece, Saltash House, and revamping the three other blocks that comprise Penwith Manor.

The successful bid for the "estate action" money came from the architects Hunt Thompson Associates and followed a three-year period of consultation with tenants. Generously, the consultation was conducted free of charge by a firm called Urban Social Environmental Research (USER) — which happens to be a subsidiary of Hunt Thompson and shares offices and switchboard at 79 Parkway, north-west London.

Conducting free tenant consultation is known in building circles as "nil-fee bidding", and the

Royal Institute of British Architects' code of conduct condemns it. Odd, then, that two years ago Hunt Thompson Associates signed the institute's code of conduct.

Many tenants now face being decanted to other estates, some for good, while the demolition and revamping take place. The works are not expected to be finished before 2020 — a memorial to Mr Major's time as housing chair he may prefer to forget.

A WIGHT MESS

THE Isle of Wight has been prodded out of its usual prosperous torpor by a scurrilous note circulating in the island's county council.

The anonymous note questions the appointment of Sam Anderson, husband of Val Anderson, Isle of Wight county council's chairwoman, to a temporary post at county hall which was not advertised publicly. The note also claims sexual misconduct between two councillors, one of whom was allegedly being investigated by the police.

Meanwhile in Newport, Medina council officers will find it hard when their council disappears to make way for a unitary authority and their jobs disappear with it. Housing manager Steve Cawtheray has got over the upset, however. He is receiving a whopping redundancy package... and after a leisurely few weeks will then walk straight into his new job with the, er, new unitary authority.

Another former employee, ex-county treasurer John Proctor who took early retirement last September, will make a comeback at the new authority as a consultant on compulsory competitive tendering. Neither council accepts responsibility for the doubling up of pay.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

AMNESIA marked the 50th anniversary of VE Day in Cardiff where many flag-waving patriots may have been unaware of the day in 1938 when the swastika flag flew over City Hall. The then lord mayor ordered the Nazi emblem to be raised in jubilation at the outcome of the Munich talks, a gesture which delighted the German consul. Cardiff councillors, 57 years on, made no mention of this old allegiance.

IN BRIEF

LANCASTER: Labour's failed bid to revamp Morecambe with a Mr Blobby theme park has cost £2m. The council opened Crinkley Bottom, owned by Noel Edmonds's Unique leisure group, last year... but it closed 12 weeks later. The council pledged £2m over three years and now owes Unique £850,000 — but no official attended a recent meeting to discuss the project, and Lancaster blames Unique for the mess.

HACKNEY: Will the new Labour regime solve the borough's housing scam? Housing boss Bernard Crofton launched Operation Network because council flats were being let out by African housing officials to illegal immigrant chums. Despite 20 deportations, cases covering 400 properties and 1,300 suspected illegal immigrants remain uninvestigated. What did Hackney do? It stopped the inquiry and suspended Crofton for alleged racism. Then it sacked him.

GLASGOW: Bad news for Labour councillor John Gaffney, who claimed to be homeless and was given a newly done up council flat in a sought-after area of the city. He was regularly seen leaving his "former" matrimonial home in the morning and returning at night. "The offer to Councillor Gaffney has been withdrawn," housing officials now say. Gaffney, a JP, says he did everything by the rules.

HARROGATE: Where was Tory group leader Chris Brown when the elections reduced the Tories to 15 out of 60 seats in the once true blue district? He was leading from the front — way in front, hill walking in Indonesia. When he returns he has another big mountain to climb.

MANCHESTER: The city's late bid for the 2002 Commonwealth games could still be rejected on technical grounds in Bermuda in November. As the government won't bail it out and no city has ever made a profit from the games, why is Labour leader Graham Stringer trying to make history (cf the Olympics, Earth Summit II, etc) repeat itself?

EARLY WORKS

A NEW Gnome University home study module in which excerpts of the early works of leading writers and artists are reappraised in a contemporary context.

This week: Salman Rushdie and the Burnley Building Society song (music by Ronnie Bond).

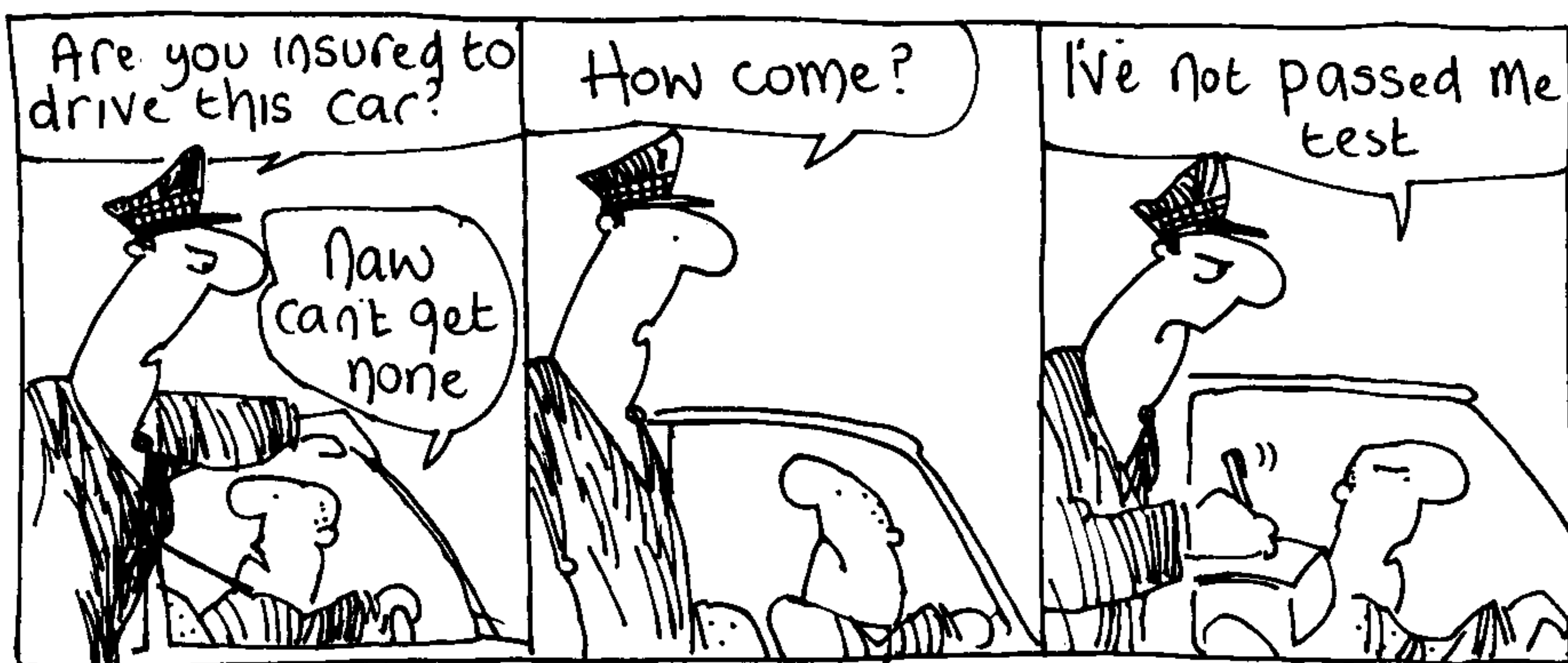
You can dream a little
you can dream a lot
but the best dreams of all
are the ones you got
building in the Burnley

£10 paid
for similar
submissions

dreamin bout a pile of money
dreamin bout wedding rings
when you're saving with the
Burnley Building Society
that's where your dreams begin...



HUSBAND



Letters

Private Eye

Sounding off

Sir,

Re. your colourful account of my nocturnal links with sound recordist come sexual flytrap Odette Nightingale in 1984 (EYE 870).

1) I did not ATTEMPT to enter Ms Nightingale's room in Glasgow. I was invited for a close of play nightcap, and accepted. What took place was, sadly for the Beeb's rumour boys, more related to Neasden than Uganda.

2) No reprimand was ever issued, unless you call punishment being sent to cover the Los Angeles Olympics a few weeks later.

3) It's bollocks to suggest I was "banned" from out of town conferences post Glasgow. I was, in fact, in charge of the news coverage of the IRA bombing at the Conservative Brighton conference later that year.

Presumably your sources emanated from the same bunch of idle, incompetent BBC radio correspondents who some months later got the heave-ho from Broadcasting House. They were too lazy to check their facts in those days, and obviously haven't lost the knack.

Yours from Godzone,
MIKE FARMAN,

Auckland, New Zealand.

What's Cooking?

Sir,

I am writing to you in order to ascertain whether or not there is some sort of "Peter Cook Appreciation Society"

I am in a London band and have found since we have been gigging that a significant number of musicians and others I've met share, like myself, more than just a passing affection for Peter's work, unique humour and general attitude towards life!

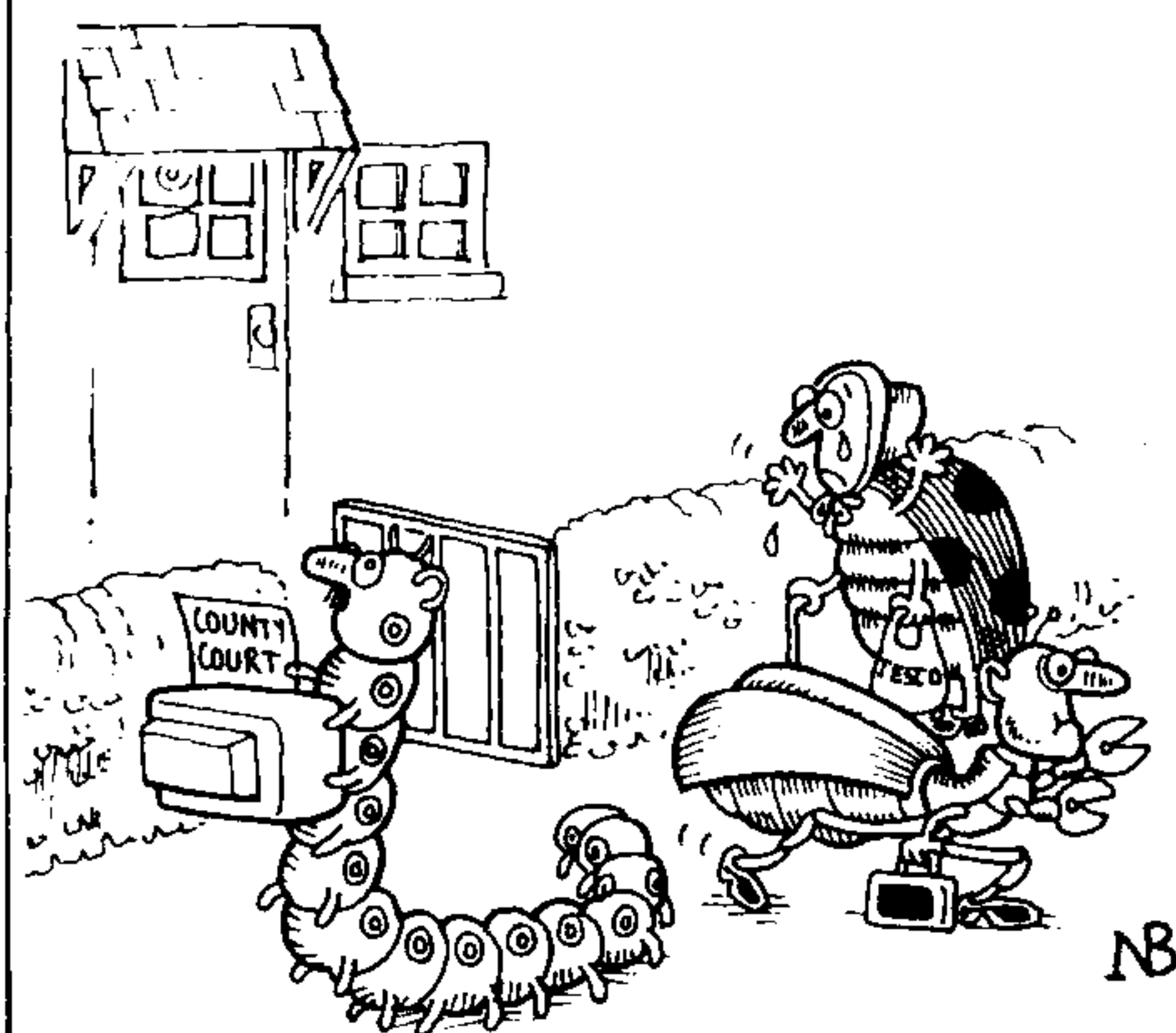
What I'm saying is that if to your knowledge such a "thing" exists, can you please supply an address? Otherwise I fear we will have no choice but to create our own (for want of a better expression) "Preservation of Peter Society" which could meet to show films, doubtless do terrible impressions of Peter's characters and sketches and, above all, laugh and have "a couple of drinks" on an occasional basis.

Any information/ideas/help regarding such a "venture" would be greatly appreciated.

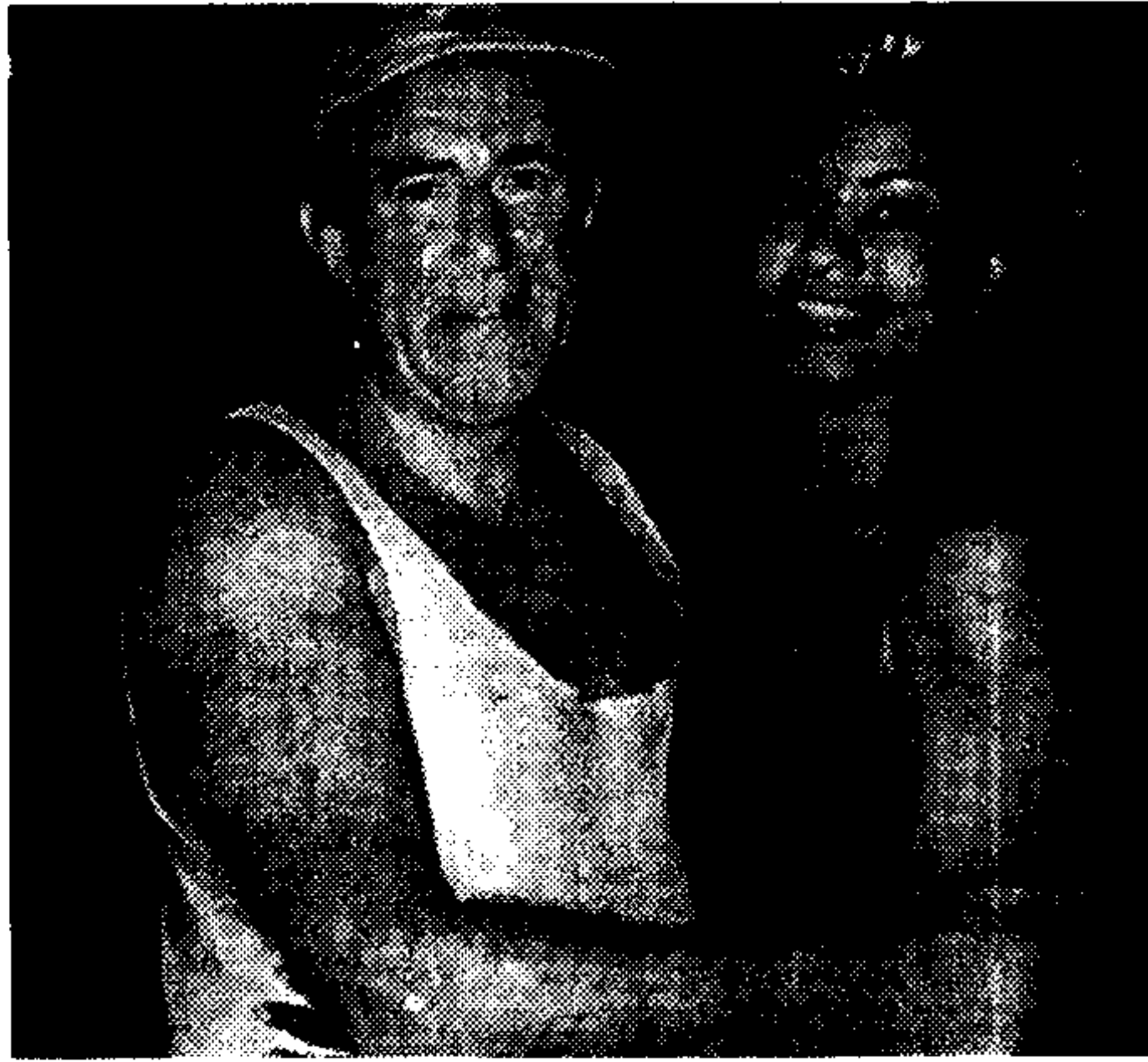
Sincerely yours,
JOHN WALLIS,

Kilburn, London.

Pre-School Nursery Facility Rhymes



Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home.
They've taken your telly and cut off
your phone.



Vest home

Sir,

You recently published — without our permission — a photo of one of our new Commonwealth care assistants who had rushed from her bed in a state of deshabillé to aid one of our older residents. In a state of confusion he had put a disposable bedpan on his head and was searching distraughtly for his jimjam top. I feel you could be a little more considerate towards someone who in his working days never caused any embarrassment to anyone. If you intend to reprint the offending photograph again, could you please also mention our facilities as I believe you have a large number of elderly gentlemen readers in need of our care.

Yours,
SHARON (Matron, acting),

The Rest Home, Oldham.

Lookalike



Angel



Blair

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed, as I have, the surprising similarity between Labour leader Tony Blair and the medieval panel depicting an angel in the Painted Chamber at Westminster? I am sure that they must be related.

Yours
ELKE AMEEN,

Celle, Germany.

Off the rails

Sir,

The letter from Ivor Jordan of "East Anglia Roads To Prosperity" contains a curious anomaly. He tells us that neither Great Yarmouth nor King's Lynn has rail access, yet both towns are in fact on the railway.

If the railways are not linked to the ports this is presumably because the connections have at some time been deliberately removed to force the traffic on to the roads — and presumably also these links could be restored at a fraction of the environmental cost of dualling "strategic roads" to promote an increase in traffic.

Sincerely,
H.W. RYE,

London E17.

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG or e-mail to stobes@cix.compulink.co.uk (marked "For Publication"). And the Eye's WWW page is now available: <http://www.intervid.co.uk/intervid/eye/gateway.html>

Swan upping

Sir,

Anyone who has paid £1.99 for Julie Burchill's NO EXIT (Remainders of the Day, EYE 870) is being seriously ripped off. Galloway and Porter in Cambridge have been flogging it from their £1 rack for the best part of a year. I'm sure Naomi Campbell's SWAN will soon be joining it.

Yours literally,
TONY CLARKE,

Ely, Cambs.

Nobody's business

Sir,

Delighted as I was to see the name of Business in the Community in Wales in your latest publication (EYE 870) I'm afraid that both the context and the reference were somewhat inaccurate.

Although we know Derek Morgan, and who in Wales does not, he is not associated with Business in the Community in Wales either through our board or the provision of any other management services.

It is also worth noting that although you listed us with a list of mainly publicly funded organisations, we are not a quango and strive to remain both politically and sectorally non-aligned.

I would be grateful if you could bring this to your readers' attention.

Yours sincerely,
SIMON KNIGHTON,

Director, Business in the Community in Wales.

Bang on

Sir,

Re Mr Humphriss' letter (EYE 871). I fail to see how he can link a depot storing explosives for the royal navy with firms selling armaments to all and sundry.

The point about the depot at Trecwn is that the people of Fishguard and Haverfordwest now believe that Archie Hamilton closed it, knowing that he could later buy it at a knockdown price, and that NATO was sold off it for use by the NATO navy after an inspection by NATO representatives drew an initial favourable response.

But who, knowing the high moral standards of the Conservative members of parliament, could believe that?

Yours faithfully,
J. ROBERTS,

Babell, Clwyd.

Spreading the word

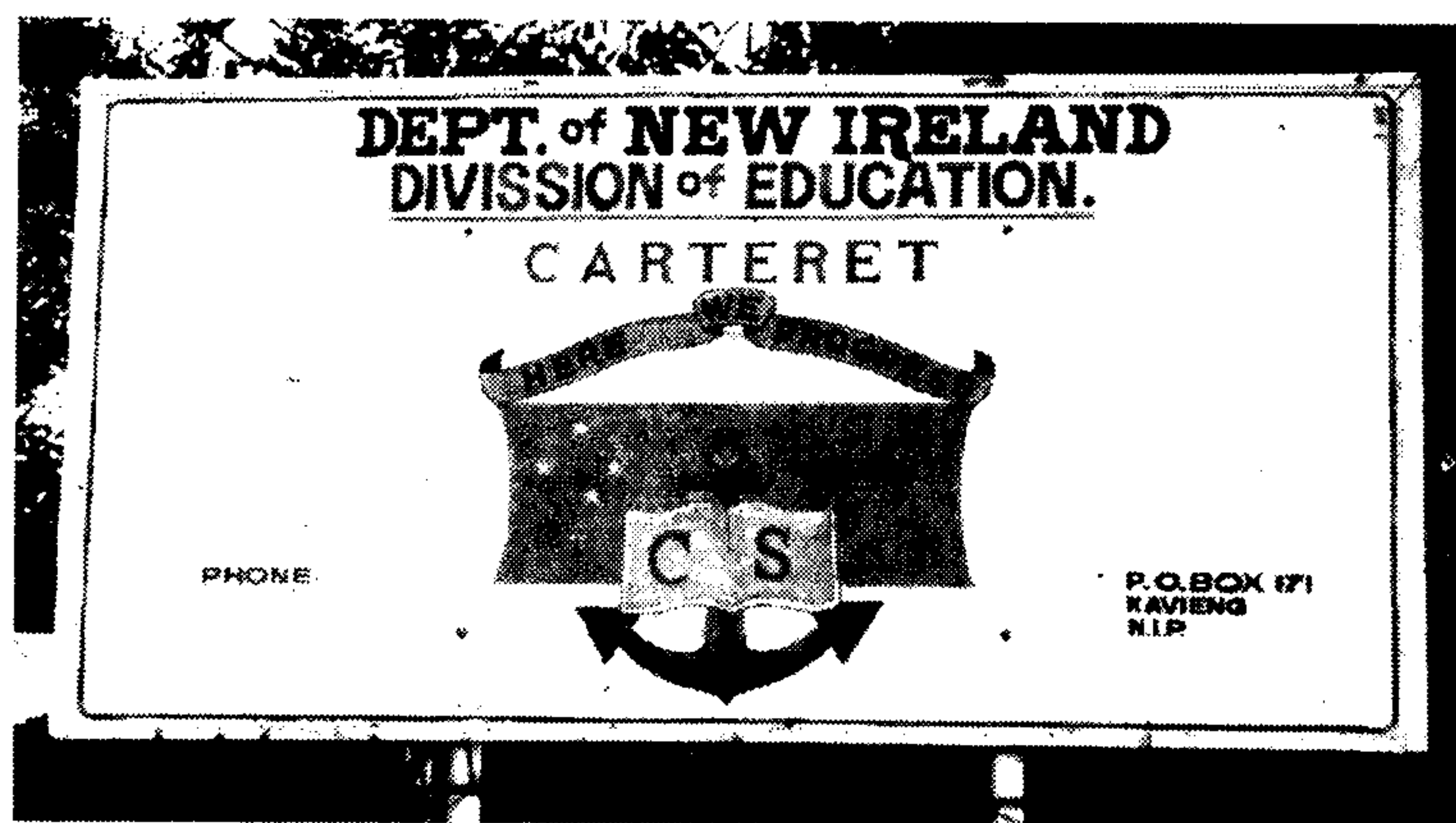
Sir,

I am most grateful to New Muckspreader (EYE 870) for drawing my attention to the allocation by Lord Howe of £2 million to the worthy cause of telling our farmers what to do with their "natural fertiliser". Presumably they would prefer something more innovative than the boring process of spreading it on their fields to encourage the growth of excessive crops. May I make a respectful suggestion?

Their present practice of spraying herbicide on their untidy vegetation to kill it off and thus qualify for "set aside" grants is in danger of being thwarted by a nasty European plot to facilitate the ingress of even greater amounts of "unnatural fertiliser" — ammonium nitrate — as used to give facelifts to the Baltic Exchange, the Stapleford Flyover, the Europa Hotel and a well-known government building in Oklahoma to name but a few, clearly in order to encourage their crops to grow again. A couple of weeks ago Eurotunnel quietly gave permission to transport container-loads of the stuff through the cross-channel pipe work.

Yours faithfully,
SIDNEY ALFORD,

Corsham, Wiltshire.



I-SPY

Submitted by Robert Bland. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

Letter from Beirut

from Our Own Correspondent

THE traveller arriving at Beirut airport has already seen the future of Lebanon — and so far, it works.

In the battered terminal building, the scene of so many hijacks and shoot-outs, every available piece of wall and window bears the grisly likeness of the president of a foreign country and his son: President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, the real president of Lebanon.

Alas, the son, Basil, will never claim the succession. God, in a traffic accident last year, took care of that. But hard to bear though it is for most Lebanese, Syria has absorbed our country completely and it will never be disgorged.

Rather like China with Hong Kong, it is a case of one country, two systems. While Syria remains a sclerotic sub-Stalinist command society, Lebanon booms again, a commercial tiger in a regional backwoods. After 17 years of civil war, our southern regions occupied by Israel and daily subject to bombing, strafing and naval blockade, Lebanon is now home to a white hot capitalist revolution.

We are witnessing the biggest building boom the Middle East has ever seen. Fifteen square kilometres of Beautiful old Beirut has been flattened by bulldozers. The Gold market, the Place of Martyrs, the old port, the great Sportstad where thousands of prisoners were once dragooned, are all gone. The priceless landmarks known to the millions of visitors who used to ski in the mountains in the morning and water-ski in the bay in the afternoon are no more.

But more remarkable still is the rebirth of state power in this land of anarchy. The Lebanese army, which four years ago was weaker than the weakest militia, is now stronger than all the militia put together. The factions — Druze, Shiite, Nasserist, Phalangist and Palestinian — are disarmed and wearing grey suits rather than mottled khaki.

The firebrand Nabih Berri, leader of AMAL, is now the respected speaker of the Lebanese parliament; the pop-eyed Druze chieftain Walid Jumblatt now builds houses rather than shells them as housing minister; and former murderers are seeded through the top echelons of the state as civil servants and technocrats. They have adapted well. Even Sheikh Fadlallah, the bloodcurdling spiritual leader of Hizbullah, has taken to issuing fatwahs on the need for Shia shopkeepers not to dump garbage on the streets and the sin of drivers who do not wear seatbelts.

The podgy prime minister Rafiq Hariri (who made an estimated \$3 billion as bagman and mysterious procurer for the Saudi dictatorship) is doing what he does best, turning muck into brass. More than 35,000 students in the Middle East studied thanks to his largesse before he turned to politics and now, under the smiling portraits of Assad, he is piloting the lift-off of Lebanon.

His closeness to the Syrian regime is a cause of much hatred, particularly to the Maronite Christian minority; but it is hard to deny his success. In less than four years Lebanon has gone from the intensive care ward to the cusp of South Korean-style recovery. Of course many are left behind. The 300,000 Palestinians — leaderless, abandoned by the Israeli-Palestinian peace and soon to be surplus to Syrian requirements when they too sign up to surrender — are once again on the agenda for expulsion, though to where God only knows. Certainly not back to their homes and lands in Palestine. The poorest — all Muslim and mainly Shia — are beneficiaries of South Korean-style compassion: ie none.

But the biggest casualty of all is the existence of Lebanon as an independent country. The Syrian army is everywhere and its *Mukhabbarat* have ears in every wall. Still, the truth is that without Syrian occupation we Lebanese would still be slaughtering each other in our collective insanity.

Hafez al-Assad has shown himself to be the only first class bastard, or "leader" as it is sometimes known, in the whole Arab world. His prize is one long coveted by Syria: the gathering in of *Bilad Ash-Sham*, the lands of greater Syria. As a poker player he has no match; and without incurring sanctions or even mild words of reproach, he has swallowed a country whole. No wonder he smiles from the hoardings.

Holiday camp follower

Sir,
Following Sharon Ervinic's (EYE 871) sketch of similarities between Joe Maplin and Labour's deputy leader, here are some more astounding parallels.

In the BBC book of the original scripts for *HI-DE-HI!*, Mr Maplin is described as "overweight and overbearing... who worked his way up from serving lunch to the idle rich, to a position of benevolent tyranny over under-paid thousands... and displaying all the conceit due to a British self-made man."

Uncanny!

Yours Fourclausingly,
IAN RHORKIS,

Hawarden, Clwyd.

Out of pocket

Sir,
Your Colour Section (EYE 871) refers to Winston Churchill's family's plans to pocket £12 million for his grandfather's papers to cover his losses as a Lloyd's name and to pay for his divorce. This less than honest love of money runs in the family. Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Sir Winston Churchill the wartime PM, received from Lord Rothschild a "loan" of £5,000 and toured South Africa investing his money in gold mines and making an enormous profit. His ancestor the Duke of Marlborough received £6,000 a year from Solomon Medina in exchange for information about the progress of the war on the continent, through which his suborners could rig the markets. Of course these amounts were worth vastly more then than now.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE B. LINDHURST,

London W5.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Steve Whatley (presenter): Audrey in Rotherham, what have you bought?

Audrey: The battery recharger.

Whatley: What will you be using that for?

Sky TV
(R.J. Pickles)

"We say 'educated left foot' — of course, there are many players with educated right foot."

RON JONES, Radio 5 Live
(Patrick Smith)

"That's twice now he [Terry Phelan] has got between himself and the goal."

BRIAN MARWOOD, Radio 5 Live
(T.W. Dunlop)

"It's not so much a thankless task, it's more a job with no thanks."

COLIN BAKER, ITV
(Anton Goodman)

"They [the authorities] would be after you like a ton of bricks."

DEREK JAMESON, Radio 2
(David Baynes)

Readers' wives

Sir,
What a terrible shock to readers of your book page to learn that Margaret Drabble is married to Michael Holroyd (EYE 871)!

Should she have signed the petition as Mrs Holroyd and risked being mistaken for her mother-in-law, or should she not have signed at all — as apparently befits the ideal PRIVATE EYE wife?

In either case you are denying her both literary independence and wifely loyalty, as well as questioning her personal integrity.

Grow up, please.
SUE WAKELY (married to Don Baillie),

Bristol, Avon.

100% spoof

Sir,
Congratulations on your Neasden AFC Cup Special edition which had me chuckling from cover to cover.

You describe Neasden as a "spoof" football team but I remember playing against them in the 1951/52 season in one of our rare away wins (Neasden 3, Mill Hill Village 4). I don't recall being hit by any flying bottles but perhaps Sid and Doris weren't around in those days.

Keep up the good work,

Sincerely,
J. WENSING,

Worthing, West Sussex.

HOM SAP



BY DAVID AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "It is true, our priest is not human," Zen Buddhist monk Hirata Isao admitted to reporters in the Yokohama Central Cemetery, "but let us dwell on the positive side. He never turns up to services drunk, he does not touch the young boys and, in all, he is completely moral and trustworthy."

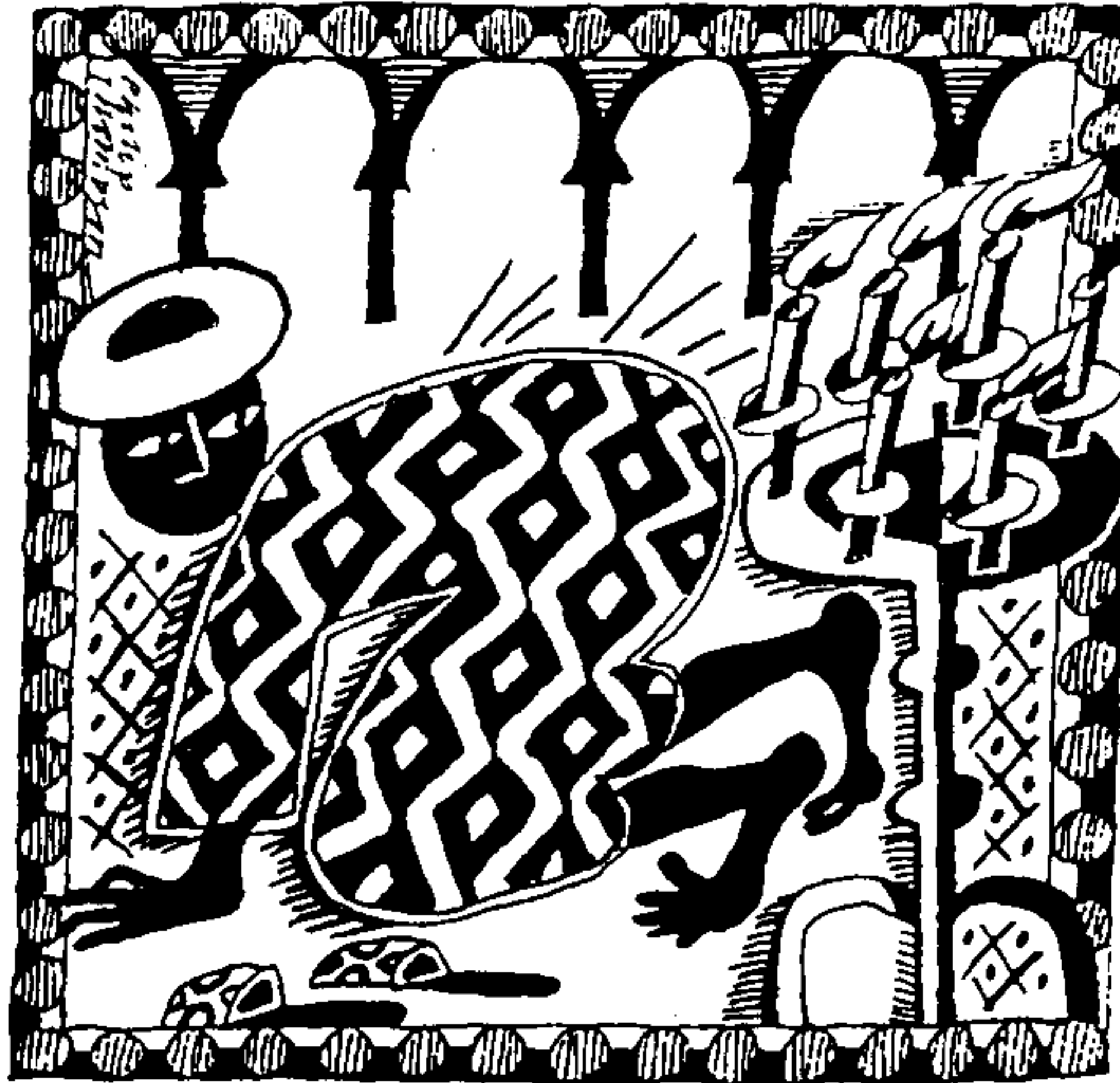
The reporters had gathered to watch *Robopriest*, a fully-ordained robot cleric who has been saying prayers in the cemetery since 1992. Isao (his inventor) continued: "He is well-versed in the liturgy of ten Japanese Buddhist sects and, when he chants the sutras, his lips and facial muscles move in time to the prerecorded blessings. He also bows his head and closes his eyes, in the manner prescribed in ancient scriptures. Most real human priests are not half as diligent as him. They turn up late, rush through the morning service, leaving half of it out, then drive off to play golf. But not *Robopriest*.

"Drawbacks? Only one. He is not fully waterproof and, when we have heavy rain, he

speaks garbled rubbish or repeats himself. One service lasted four days. In the end, we had to unplug him." (*Toronto Globe & Mail*, March 1995. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

— ○ —

● Q: "I often turn to your excellent problem page in the *Arab News*, but never thought I would one day require its services. I am suffering because my ablution is frequently invalidated as a result of wind. I



am often unable to complete my prayer with the same ablution, and have to leave the mosque to have a fresh ablution. I also fear I may dim candles..." (Problem page in *Arab News*, 3/2/95. [Answer on request] Spotter — T.M. Edwards)

— ○ —

● "I did not bite her private parts, only up where it's fat," Musana Mikaya swore to a court in Soroti town, Uganda. "I love my woman, but for two years she has failed to conceive, and then she said she would not serve me warm food. What else was I to do?"

Mikaya was defending himself, before Soroti magistrates, against a charge of injuring his wife, Musano Abiro, by biting her *alipong*. Prosecuting counsel Okwi James told the court what had happened. "Mikaya came home demanding food. When Abiro told him the fire had burnt out, he said 'If the food is cold, then give me your body which is warm,' then he got down between her legs and sank his teeth into her *alipong* several times, shouting 'now you will be able to conceive' each time he released his bite. Screaming 'My *alipong* has been ripped off by a possessed one', she ran naked into the street and headed for the police station, but when she told the duty officer what had happened, the policemen doused her with cooking oil and herbs and slammed the door in her face, from fear that she was a witch."

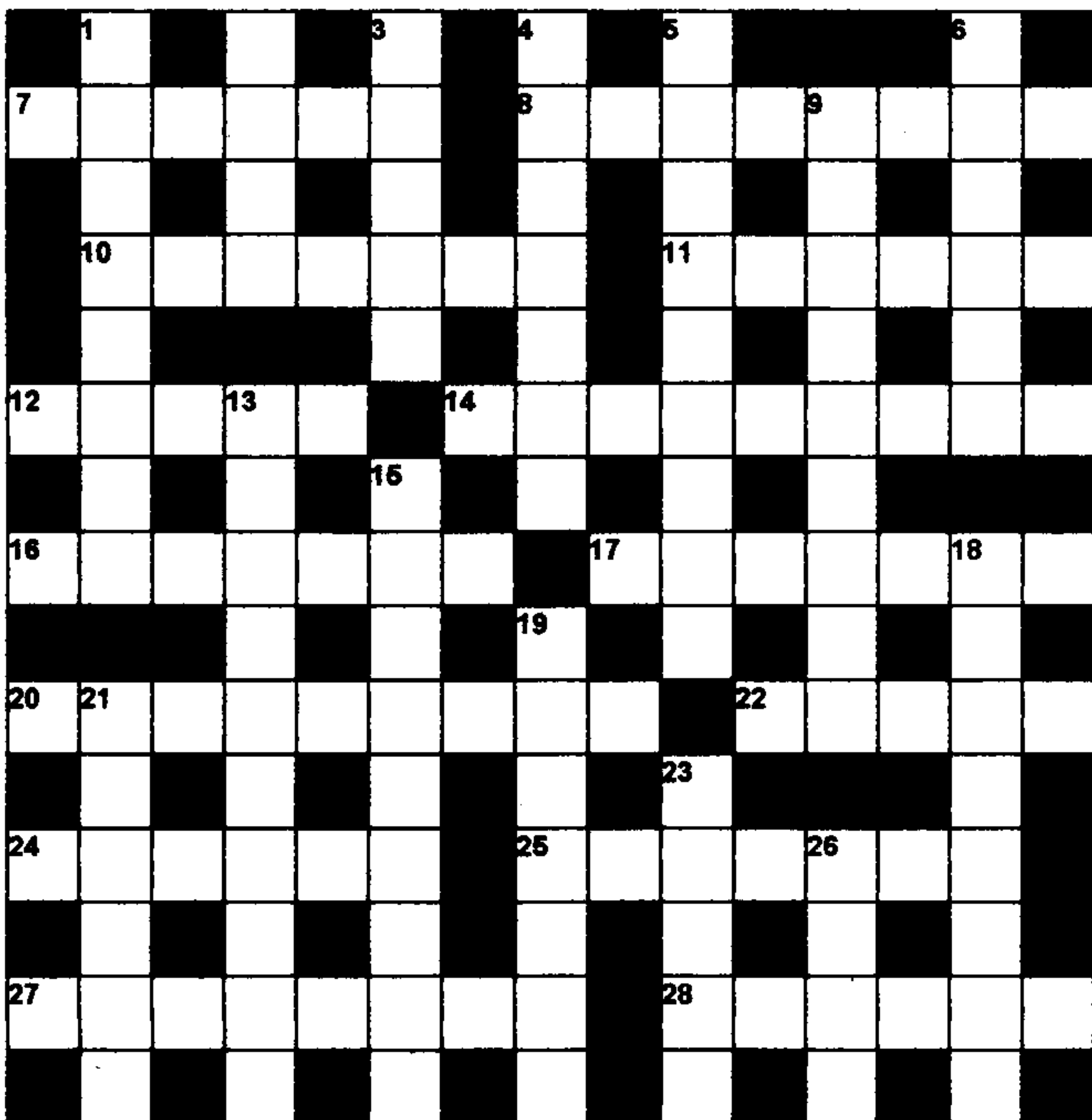
Testifying in her husband's defence, Abiro said: "My *alipong* is still very sore, making it impossible for me to attend dance classes. And, yes, I ended up in hospital, but if you imprison Mikaya, who will put meat on my table? I have decided to interpret Mikaya's actions as a gesture of love. And I am now pregnant." (*The Monitor [Kampala]*, 1-3 February 1995. Spotter — Trevor Dudley)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 28 by Cyclops

£100 Winner
JOHN LEWIS



ACROSS

- 7/6 New craze: tales of corrupt tendency in the government's ranks (6,6)
8 Wild party clothes — just the thing for inner-city policing? (4,4)
10 It's usual to be on speed for our MPs (7)
11 Dump Ron Todd inside quick! (6)
12 Born to take the piss out of english incentive (5)
14 Cane that's grown to be a vulgar retaliatory response (9)
16 Di's mad for one in the morning with popular dictator (3,4)
17 Who created the story of Guy Fawkes? (7)

- 20 Family-loving politician has one long carnal spree with Kay we hear (4,5)
22 If Marx came back, he'd make a pisspoor chat show host (5)
24 Arse-licking s and m soldiers (6)
25 Pro who wouldn't take court official seriously (7)
27 The country's legacy from That Woman: ticket in one direction (8)
28 Sexually ambivalent type's bound to be a minister! (6)

DOWN

- 1 Parliamentary knocker is deeply depressed at bar (5,3)
2 What do you call the Queen Mother on top of a male? (4)
3 (see 26)
4 Some prat, Sir Teddy, upset high flier (7)
5 Public opinion — quite academical (3,6)
6 (see 7)
9 The pace of Nazism represented by Wally, as they used to say, on stage (5-4)
13 Rabin's awful sap, deserting intellectuals (5,5)
15 Rocker years ahead of his partners (4,5)
18 Brief moon-walking and kinky eastern porn, the subject of Lloyd Webber musical (3,5)
19 What emerges from Brighton: inner sign of troubled sleep for John Major (7)
21 BAFTA winner Melly uncontrollably astride sheep we hear (6)
23 Sabre-rattling Pole forsakes a people at war (5)
26/3 Stupid tosser, pro-Clinton opponent (4,5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 19.05.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 27

ACROSS: 1/30 Mother Teresa 4 Klosters 10 The Senate 11 Nye 12/14 Feel-good factor 14 (See 12) 16 Bob Geldof 17 Stasi 18 Ruled 20 Misgovern 22 Sadist 23 Abstains 26 Enema 27 Recession 29 Kosygin 30 (See 1ac).

DOWN: 1 Motif 2 The Beeb 3 Eye 5 Leer 6 Sunday Sport 7 Electra 8 Sovereign 9 Major-domo 13 Glenda Slagg 15 A fast buck 16 Birtspcak 19 Ledgers 21 Edifice 24 Santa 25 Iran 28See.

NEW IN
THE EYE!



JULIE BULLSHIT

MEN — aren'tchasickof-them? I am. I really am. Men. Sick. Of. Them. I. Am.

WOMEN — don'tchaluv'em? I do. They're great. I. Love. Them. No — it's men I'm sick off!

MEN — aren'tchasick-of-them? I love women. Yes, I do but I'm sick of men!!!

P.S. Men and Women? I'm sick of one and I love the other! Guess which?! Clue: It isn't women I'm sick of because I love them. It's men because they make me sick.

© Julie Buldyke.

Reprinted from the Sunday Times
News Review.



FIGHT NEWS

BOOS GREET LATEST BOUT

by Our Fistic Correspondent
Lunchtime O'Bruise

THE WORLD of boxing was sent reeling yesterday at the fiasco of champion Tony Blairo's latest victory in the Commons.

Commentators were quick to point out that his 51 year-old opponent was "frankly, a has-been".

Analysing the form of Blairo's adversary, Johnny "Greyman" Major, the ringside experts noted that Johnny was "lightweight, unfit, lacked punch, and had lost the previous 27 contests".

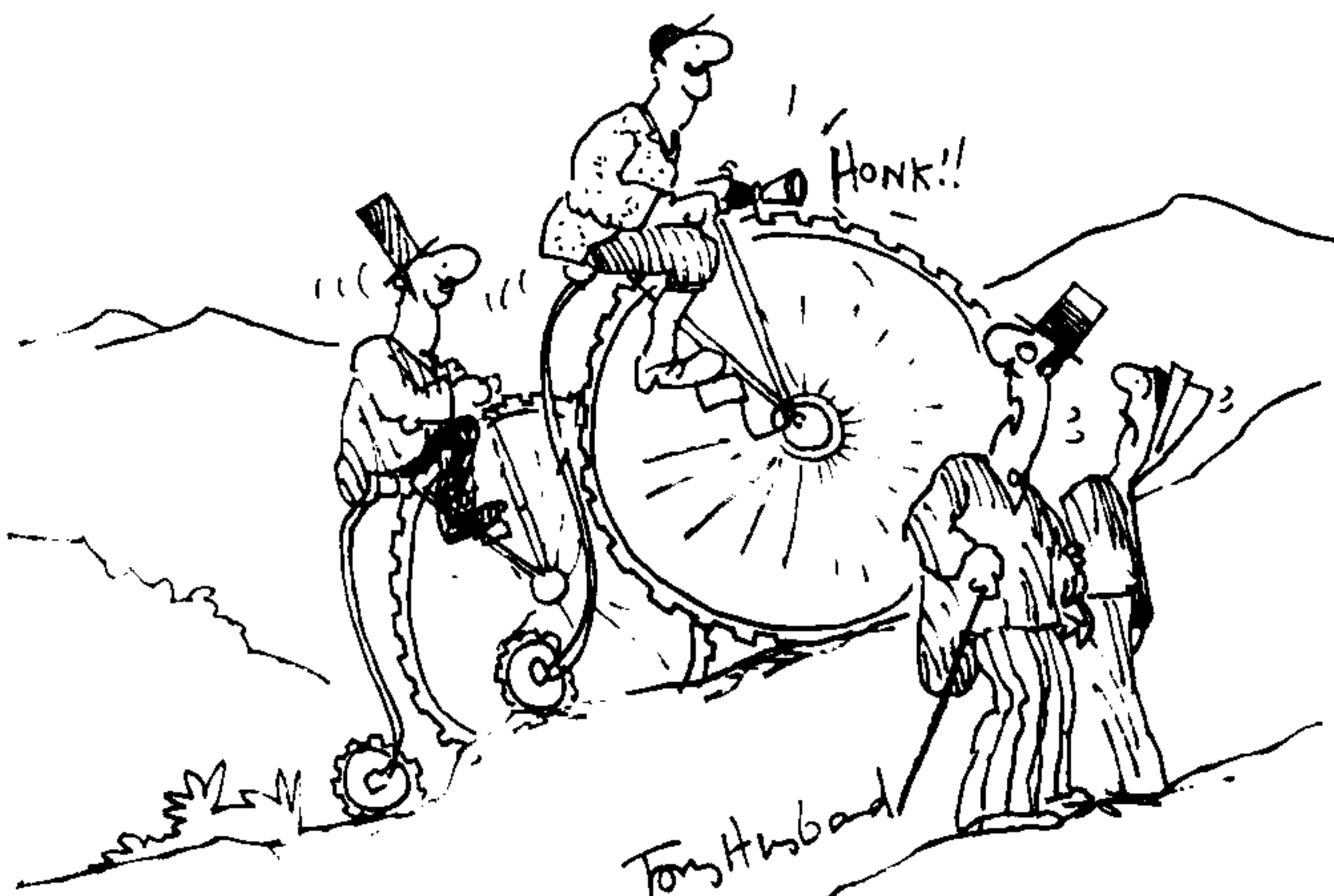
"It was just a joke," said one disgruntled fan. "Major could not defend himself against Blairo's pathetic onslaught. It was over in minutes."

Shadow Cabinet Boxing

Blairo's critics, however, say that he should not be recognised as the champion at this early stage.

"He has not proved himself against a serious opponent," said political analyst Harry Carpenter. "He would not last 2 seconds against a real heavyweight like 'Mad' Maggie Thatcher or Mike Portillo the Hun".

Frank Bruno is 17 stone.



"Curse those Mountain Penny-Farthings!"

KHAN/GOLDSMITH WEDDING

EXCLUSIVE PICTURE



Poetry Corner

In Memoriam Lord Goodmanzee

So. Farewell
Then.
Lord Goodman.

The World's Greatest
Lawyer.

You were called
Mr Fix It.

Because you could
Keep anything

Out of the
Papers.

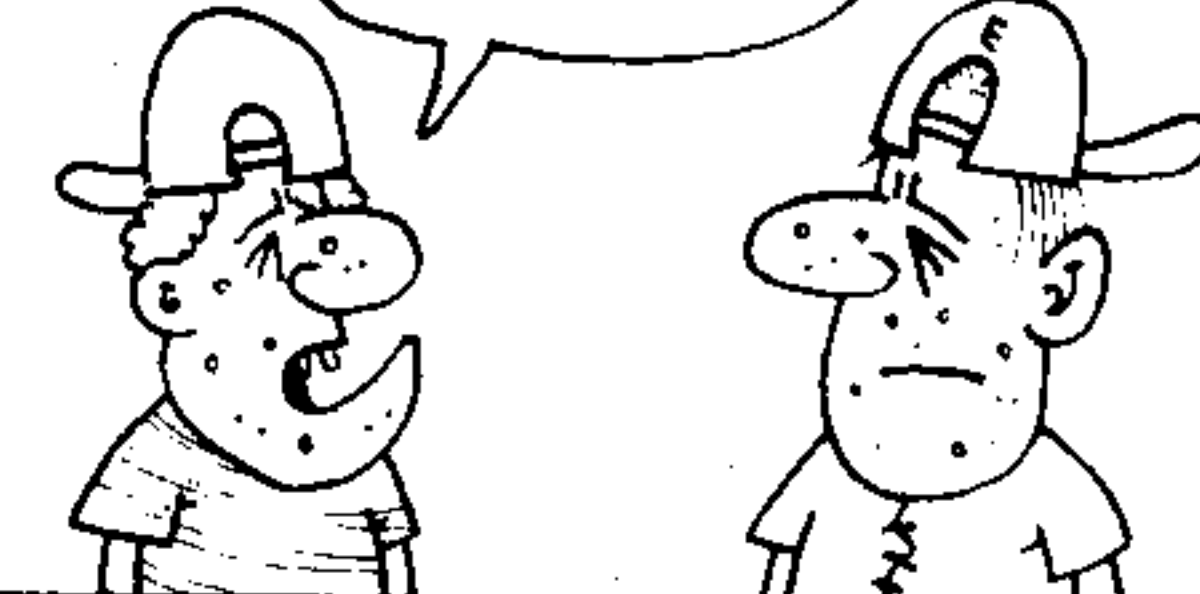
But you are
Unable to
Kill this
Story.

Even if you
Wanted to.

E.J. "Two Dinners" Thribb
(17¾ stone)

LAUGHTER WITH THE JOYRIDERS

HOW DO YOU GET FOUR ELEPHANTS
IN A MINI?



DITCH IT AND NICK A BLOODY GREAT
Yo! 4x4 INSTEAD?



A page two article in the Sunday/Monday edition of the AVIS printed Senate candidate Violet Anne Golden's name incorrectly. She is not Violent Anne Golden. The AVIS regrets any confusion this may have caused.

The St Croix Avis (US Virgin Is.)



FRANK SINATRA

Daily Record,

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47½

Friday

We have not done anything like as badly in the local elections as some people said we would, i.e. Mr Hanley. He said it would be a disaster if we lost 2000 seats, and in fact we only lost 2200, so it was not a disaster at all. So much for Mr Hanley. I asked Mr Morris Norris to write me out an upbeat speech explaining why this showed that we were going to win the next general election. He gave me a funny look and asked if he could be sacked instead. In the end I wrote my own speech which I think not even Mr Churchill could have improved on. Oh no. It went in no small measure like this. "When the British people have got their backs to the wall, like in the war, they turn round and fight." When I read out my speech to Mr Hurd he said in his typically toffee-nosed way "I think our problem, Prime Minister, is that it is you who have got your back to the wall while the British people are against you." "But I will still turn round and fight," I said in my new "bulldog" voice. "Forgive me, prime minister, but to elaborate on your metaphor, if you turn round when you have your back to the wall, that means you are now facing the wall — rather like the dunce in a school classroom." He then gave me one of his silly little upper-class sniggers and said that he would love to hear more of my speech but that he was sure I was far too busy.

Saturday

Today is a very historic day indeed, as I am the first British prime minister to go to Northern Ireland since Mrs Thatcher. I was able to do this only because my peace process has been such a complete triumph and now the violence is completely ended. When I arrived in a place called Londonderry (which is not in London at all, but in Derry) everybody was so excited to see me that they started throwing stones at the police. My friend Sir Patrick Mayhew explained that this was a traditional Irish way of welcoming visitors.

Sunday

My press man Mr Meyer has told me that it is very important for me to go abroad for the great VE-Day celebrations. This way I can be seen on television as a world leader with all the other world leaders, which I am. Oh yes. Today I had to go to Paris in France where we saw

thousands of French soldiers marching down the Champs Elysees. It was very impressive and I asked Mr Meyer why we hadn't had any troops marching down the streets of London. "That would have been difficult, prime minister," he explained, "since you asked Mr Rifkind to abolish most of the army to pay for your tax cuts." I ignored this unhelpful remark and prepared for my historic conversations with Mr Herr Kohl and Mr Monsieur Chirac, who has just been elected as the new President of France. I was particularly encouraged by this as Mr Chirac is a Conservative. I was going to tell him that this was a very good omen for me, but unfortunately I could not because of a mistake in the seating plan. I could see Mr Kohl



and Mr Chirac sitting together on the big table, but I was sitting at a small table near the kitchen with a Mr Chief Awolowu from the Cameroons. He told me how much he admired our British prime minister Mrs Thatcher. This made me even more annoyed than I had been by the silly mistake in the seating plan.

Monday

It is not only the French who make mistakes in the seating plan, as I discovered today in Moscow which is in Russia. I was there to watch lots of Russian troops marching through Red Square to celebrate their victory over Chechnya. I was really looking forward to talking to Mr Yeltsin and my special friend Mr Clinton, but unfortunately when we had lunch I found that they were on the big table, and I was on a small table by the toilet with a Mr President Nazhikahmed from Uzbekistan. He told me how much he admired our British prime minister Mrs Thatcher. I am looking forward to getting back to a country where I am appreciated!

Tuesday

When I got home I was very encouraged to see Mr Heseltine on the television rallying all Conservatives to support me. Not that they don't already. Oh no. But it was still very kind of him to say "We Tories must stop criticising John Major. We must stop going on about his failures and the need to replace him with an older more vigorous man who can unite the party." This

is just the kind of support I need. It is good to know that at least one Conservative is still loyal.

Wednesday

Mrs Bottomley is very unpopular because she has decided to close all the hospitals in London. In our Cabinet meeting she told us that there could be "no U-turn on this issue".

This is not true because as soon as she left the room we all decided that we would stop supporting her as soon as we had voted for her silly plan.

In the Commons we all sat as far away from her as we could so that the camera would make it look as if she was all on her own. This will be good practice for her because after the reshuffle (which will make me popular again) she will be very considerably on her own at home. Oh yes!

Thursday

Mr Nolan has sent me his report which is very good indeed. It has a new code of conduct in it which is rather like one of my charters. The main points are that MPs should not:

- 1) Lie
- 2) Cheat
- 3) Steal

This is radical stuff but I think I can persuade most of the party to go along with it (though I am not sure about Mr Aitken).

Friday

Mr Nolan's report is actually very bad indeed. Mr Hanley has now read all of it and has told me that Mr



Nolan wants to know where the Tory Party gets all its funds from. How dare he! Who does he think he is? Who appointed Mr Nolan anyway? He should mind his own business.

When I asked Mr Hanley where we do get the money from he went red and said that a lot of it came from people who lie, cheat and steal.

"But they are not politicians, are they?" I said. "So that is all right."

"Mr Nolan has a lot to learn about politics," I said later to my wife Norman over our late-night half-past-nine drinks of Ovaltine.

"And you should know," she said supportively.

SHOCK UNITY PLEA FROM HEZZA

by Our Political Staff
Simon Hefferlump

IN A dramatic intervention last night, the President of the Board of Trade, Michael Heseltine, urged the Conservative Party to end "the damaging divisions which threaten to lose us the election".

"We must agree," he said, "on what it is we are divided over."

"At the moment," he explained to a respectful audience of backbenchers, "we seem to have no idea which issue to disagree about. Is it Europe? The Health Service or the nuclear privatisation? If we can't even unite on which issue to fall apart over, then we have no hope of impressing the electorate."

However some senior Tories were quick to distance themselves from the unity call. A group of at least 30 rebel MPs have broken away and issued a statement denouncing Heseltine's views. They have unilaterally refused to reach a consensus on what it was that they could not reach a consensus on.

Michael Heseltine is after No. 10.

A Doctor writes



As a doctor, I'm often asked: "Is Mrs Bottomley now so certifiably insane that she should be locked away in a lunatic asylum?" The short answer is "yes, but unfortunately there aren't any left because she's closed them all down".

© A. Doctor



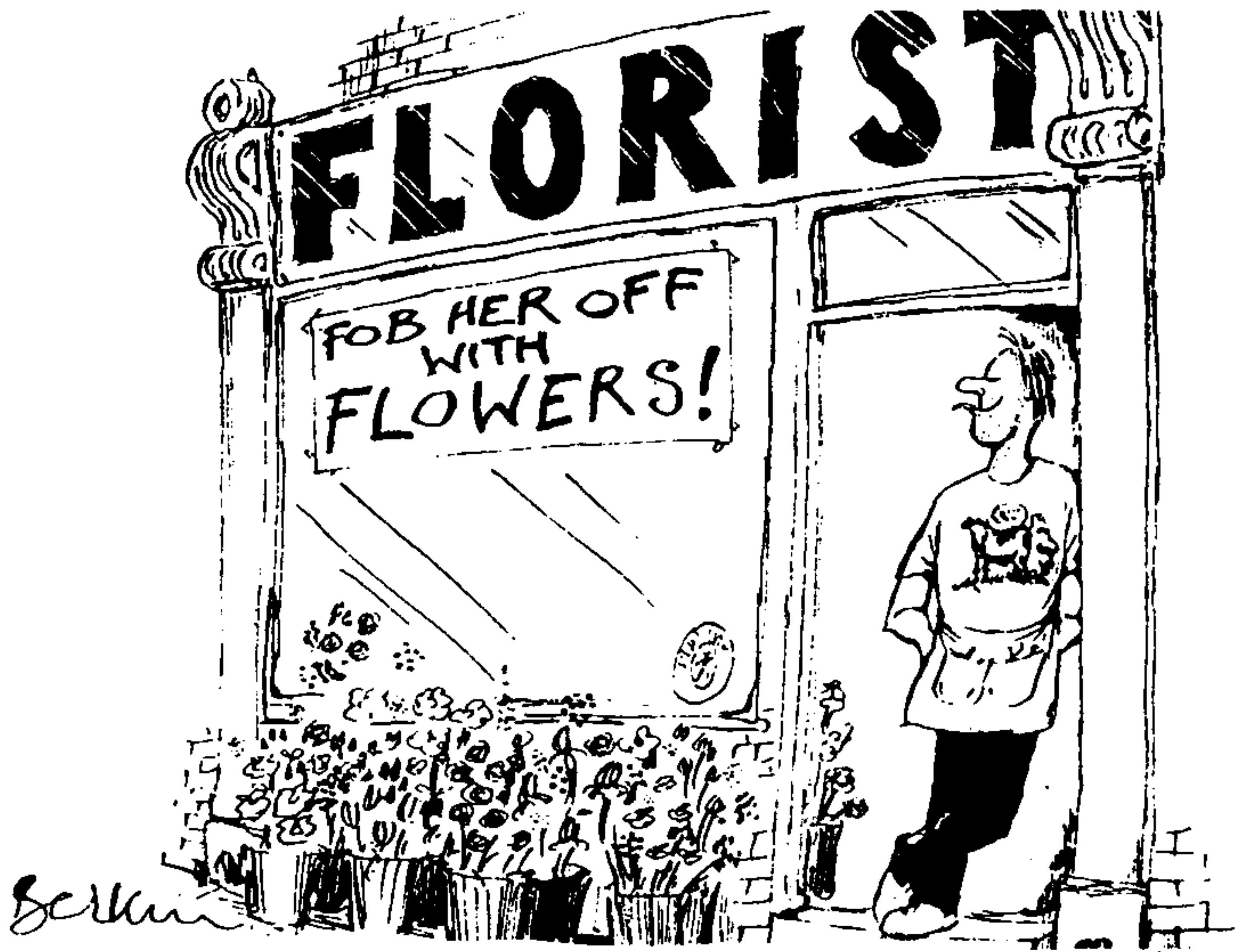
Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's unbelievable Norway nul points for all those years and then suddenly they run away with it and it's not even a song it's just a tune and the violinist is Irish anyway and she's married to a Norwegian who wrote it or something I had to laugh when Germany only got one point they had it coming to them after VE Day and everything and it was brilliant when Terry Wogan said Cyprus would give Greece 12 points and they *did* got a light? (cough cough) but he got it wrong with France he said they'd give us nothing and actually they gave us maximum douze points I wouldn't have given it anything it was rubbish and rap is out isn't it? isn't it? try one of these no-tobacco fags (cough cough) that Maltese bloke was a scream wasn't he? he sung in English which was even worse than the Hungarian entry the Bosnians were good considering you know everything and the Israeli girls did you see their legs? that comes from being in the army and the close-up of the lead singer her dental work was amazing Israeli dentists are the best in the world apparently Terry Wogan is always good but this year I thought he excelled himself (cough cough) I've got a terrible sore throat it must be a virus it's not that Ebola thing is it? ..."

Celeb

L I G G E R





ADAMS CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AT SINN FEIN DEMO

by Our Ulster Staff
Belfast Mooney

ULSTER'S man of peace St Gerard of Adams today lashed out at the "thugs and hooligans" who had disrupted the prime minister's historic visit to Ulster.

"It is outrageous to think," said

the bearded holy man, "that when some of us are working tirelessly for peace that a handful of armed extremists — i.e. the police — are deliberately formenting trouble and engaging in deliberate acts of violence on our peaceful streets."

Mr Adams called for the "decommissioning" process to begin immediately, by the RUC handing over all their arms to the IRA.

MEN IN THE EYE

Who are the men who this week come face to face in the historic Northern Ireland peace talks?

For the Government

Mr Michael Twytt, b. 1956. Formerly the Earl of Twytte, this deceptively genial Old Etonian is a devout Catholic, who enjoys nothing more than a day's shooting.

For the Next Government

Mr Seamus O'Carbomb, b. 1956. Formerly inmate 07356 in the



prestigious Maze prison, this deceptively peaceloving terrorist is a devout Catholic who enjoys nothing more than a day's shooting.

'GAZZA IS OURS' CLAIMS KNEE

World Of Soccer

by E.I. Erewego, Our Man With The £5000 Season Ticket Paid For By His Newspaper And The Pile Of Used "Instants" (also paid for by his newspaper)

THE soccer world paid no attention at all yesterday to the news that Neasden supremo Ron Knee had offered £25.27 million for the world's most famous footballer.

E.I. Gazzio

Said an ashen-faced Knee, 57: "Take it from me. Next season, Gazza will be pulling on a Neasden No. 94 shirt and bringing millions of fans flocking back to the deserted wastelands of Neasdenbridge."

The tight-lipped mastermind of many a five-figure transfer deal last night denied suggestions that he was just indulging in a cheap publicity stunt.

"I have today spoken personally to Bamber Gascoigne's agent, and it is now a 101 per cent certainty that the unsettled presenter will be moving to Neasden from University Challenge before the big August kick-off."

LATE SCORE

Univ. Challenge	14
(Paxman 6, Pevsner [o.g.] 8)	
Neasden F.C.	0

Radio Highlights

That New Youth-Appeal Archers In Full

(Signature tune. Rap version of traditional Dum-Di-Dum-Di-Dum-Di-Dum by Snoop Doggy Labrador)

Kate Aldridge: OK Mum, so I've had a joint. A spliff. Shit. Smack. Grass. Weed. Hash. Speed. Pot. Mariellafrostrup! What the hell do you care? You're just so square, why don't you just chill out, get in the groove and give me some more space, OK?

Mrs Aldridge: I don't know what your father will have to say.

Kate: That old Daddy-O! He can get out of my face! He doesn't even know I'm having an abortion and I'm joining an order of Lesbian Druid Motorway Protestors!

Roy: Hi Kate! Hi Mrs Archer! I just came round to borrow a cup of heroin. I've just been down the Bull meeting my crack dealer but he's been machinegunned in cold blood by the Ambridge Triads!

Kate: Wow! Happening! Gear! Fab! Simon Mayo!

(Continued on 94KHz)

A GNOME VE DAY SERVICE

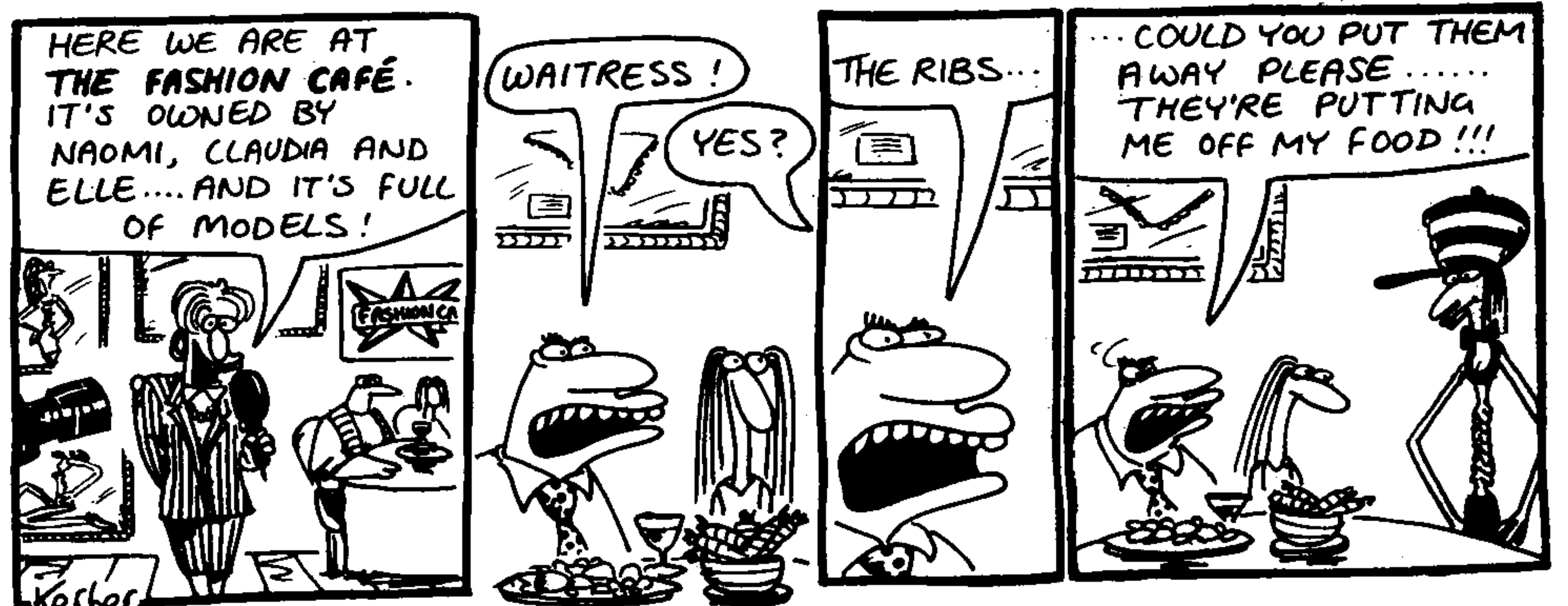
If you missed the historic two-minute silence at 8.38 on Monday 8 May, you can experience it as it happened by simply ringing this number now:

0898-12-34-56

(calls charged at 38p a minute
or £1.60 for the whole two minutes)

All proceeds to Lord Gnome's VE Day Commemoration Fund, Cayman Islands.

SUPERMODELS





MASSIVE VICTORY FOR TORIES BOOSTS MAJOR

By Our Political Staff **JEREMY HANLEY**

THE smile on Virginia Bottomley's face said it all.

Last night she won a stunning victory for the government which has routed the critics, terrified the Labour Party and sent Tory hopes sky-high.

Said one unnamed backbench MP "my wife was fantastic". And no one could disagree.

Lies

The House of Commons has rarely seen such a personal triumph as that achieved by a radiantly beautiful Princess Diana (*surely Health Minister?*) as she trampled her Labour and Tory opponents into the dirt.

Her plan to destroy a series of popular London hospitals has won her the admiration of millions of

Tory voters who in last week's local elections showed their appreciation of all that she is doing for the Health Service.

More Lies

In a dazzling display of parliamentary oratory rarely equalled since the wartime Churchill, Mrs Bottomley said "I am committed to delivering a first-class health service to Londoners by the year 2050, and the first step towards this is a rationalisation of the capital's primary and secondary health-care facilities."

As huge crowds jammed the Mall, Mrs Bottomley and Mr Major joined the Queen Mother on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to acknowledge the cheers of millions of grateful patients and doctors.

The crowds began to sing "Rule Virginia" and "Smash Bart's Now", as the Blue Arrows launched a low-level bombing raid on London's best-loved hospitals.

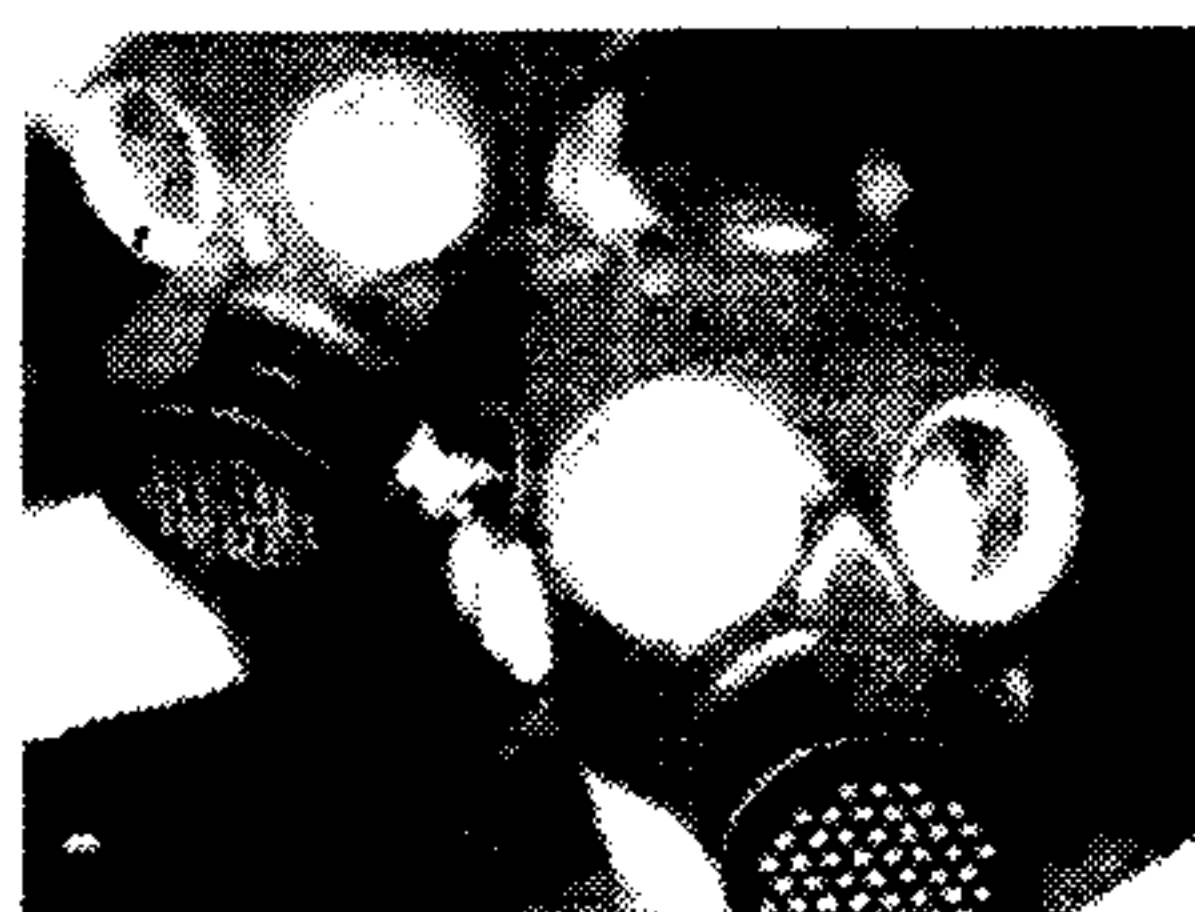


Queen Mother "Delighted" by Tory Win

ON OTHER PAGES: Lie Oh Lie by Paul Johnson p.8

GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING

OFFICIAL SMUG ALERT



The whole of the country is now in danger of being enveloped by smug. The recent Labour victory in the local elections has unleashed a huge cloud of hot air which has created the perfect conditions for smug. If you feel nauseous, irritable, or have difficulty taking in blair then you must turn off the television and radio, throw away the newspapers and stay in your room for the next five years.



QUENTIN TORYTINO



'WE ARE A LISTENING GOVERNMENT' says Major

by Our Political Staff
Simon Hefferlump

FOLLOWING criticisms that the government had "lost touch" with its supporters (Sid and Doris Waldegrave), the Prime Minister has asked Tory Chairman James Hanley to set up a special telephone "hot line". The idea is that ordinary members of the public can ring in with their suggestions as to what the government should do next.

Yesterday Mr Hanley said: "From now on we are the Listening Party."

"It is our top priority to listen very carefully indeed — round the clock if we have to — to anything the voters want us to hear."

Middle England Bank

"Make no mistake — listening is now our number one priority. It puts us in the listening seat, and the voters of Britain down the other end of a phone line telling us to bring back Mrs Thatcher."

John Major is 51.



How it will work

Hundreds of new phone lines are to be installed at Tory Central Office, on a special free-phone "Tory Listening Line".

Each phone will be attached to a voice-activated tape recorder.

On connection, the caller will hear a personal introductory message, specially recorded by the Prime Minister himself.

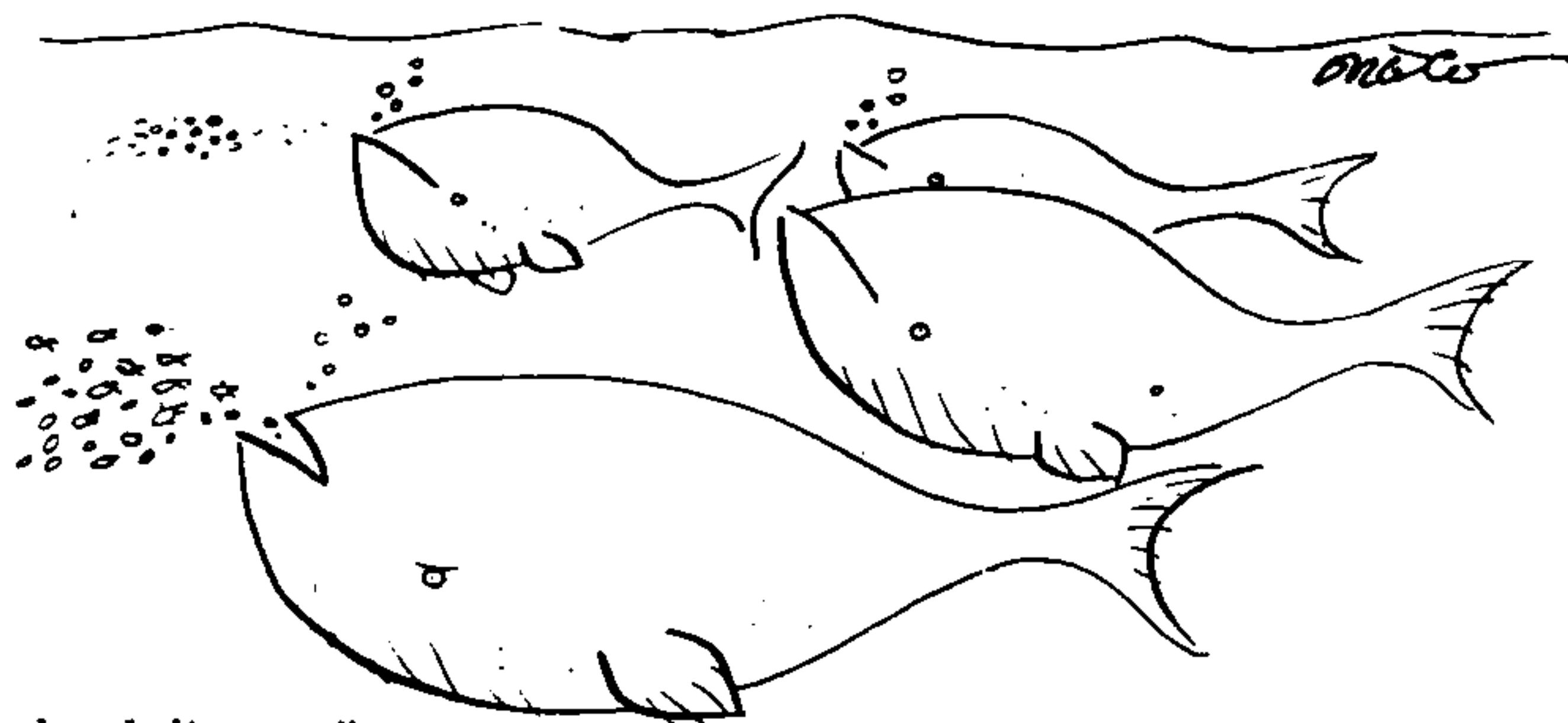
This will say: "Hullo. This is John Major. I am listening."

Talk for as long as you like."

This will activate a blank cassette for the caller to record his or her views.

Unfortunately, a cash-strapped Central Office is unable to say yet what will happen to the tapes once they have been recorded.

But historians believe that in future years they could provide a unique sound archive of why everybody voted Labour at the next election.



"I hate school dinners"

'ABSOLUTELY USELOUS' TO END

by Our TV Staff
Marcus Bartsman

THE long-running farce "Absolutely Useless" is set to close this week after a hilarious final episode in which the outrageous blonde star (played by Virginia Bottomley) is humiliated in the House of Commons.

Virginia, who has won no awards and no critical acclaim for her role as the tough-talking bitch who wants to close down the NHS, has become one of the country's least-loved comic figures and no one will mourn her passing.

"All bad things have to come to an end and even a really terrible show like this cannot go on indefinitely," said producer John Major.

"The problem is" he



continued, "that we have no more ideas. What could Virginia do that is more stupid and more unpleasant than what she has already done? No, she's going to quit while she is behind."

So, have we seen the last of the fag-and-drink hating harpie? We do hope so.

Virginia Bottomley looks 78.

Peter McLie

The World's Worst Columnist

AM I the only one to have noticed that it is almost 50 years since the end of the Second World War?

Should we not mark this historic occasion in some way?

Perhaps the Queen Mother could repeat her performance by coming out on the balcony of Buckingham Palace?

And surely Dame Vera Lynn is still alive somewhere, and could be invited out of retirement to regale us with some of her much-loved wartime hits, such as *Congratulations* and *Puppet On A String*?

On second thoughts, maybe not. Perhaps it is just as well that we ignored the whole thing completely.

After all, folk are not interested in that old stuff any more.

THE ECONOMY is booming at last. The feelgood factor has arrived.

Happy days are here again.

No wonder John Major is on course for a landslide victory at the next election.

There are those who think that poor Mr John Smith will not even win a single seat.

I would not go so far myself. But I fear that it is the end of the Labour Party.

Isn't life dandy and grandy?

WHO says the British can't make sitcoms any more?

I have been watching a new series on the BBC called Dad's Army.

It is set in the Second World War and is absolutely hilarious.

Every line was a winner. Every situation was a hoot.

Mrs McLie and myself roared with laughter.

They should put it on every night, instead of all that dreadful rubbish imported from America, like Heartbreak High and Steptoe and Son.

MY FRIEND Andrew Wilson tells me that the days of the credit card may be numbered.

Apparently you can now get pieces of coloured paper which can be handed to shop assistants or bartenders in exchange for their wares.

Even taxi drivers, I gather, are beginning to accept this handy form of instant barter.

I have even thought of a name for it — the Suez Canal. (*Brilliant! I must give you more Suez Canal — Ed.*)



That Soviet VE Day Peace Parade In Full

Red Square, Thursday

On Podium

(underneath special Peace Logo showing Hammer, Sickel and French Fries, kindly sponsored by McDonald's)

President Yeltsin and Bottle
(shurely 'Mrs Yeltsin'? Ed)

President Clintstone and Saxophone
(shurely 'Hillary Roddam Testosterone III'? Ed)

Herr Reichskanzler Adolf Kohl and Mrs Braun

Unidentified Man in Suit (possibly J. Major)

The Procession Was Formed As Follows

3 Regiments of the Elite Internal Warfare Special Troops, fresh from their triumph in Chechnya

2,000 T-74 Anti-Personnel Carriers (originally 4,000, but the other half were sold to the Chechens by their drivers for a bottle of vodka)

10,000 veterans from the Great Patriotic War over Afghanistan hobbling past on one leg

A fly-past of 20,000 Ilyshin Aeroflot bombers, most of which crash on suburbs of Moscow due to engine failure

50,000 veterans of Stalin's Gulags, celebrating the Great Patriotic Purges of 1941-1980

The ex-KGB Regiment (now renamed "Group Fourski" and "Securicorski") marching past in ill-fitting uniforms

The Mafia Guard, who fire ceremonial 3,000-round salute at each other

10-mile queue for bread follows procession

Floats Representing Soviet Entertainment During The Great Patriotic War

1st Float: Vera Lynnski singing selection of much-loved wartime hits, including "We'll Never Meet Again" and "We're Going To Throw You Over The White Cliffs Of Dover"

2nd Float: Cliff Richardov singing "We're All Going On A Siberian Holiday".

3rd Float: The Glenn Millerski Orchestra playing "The Chechnyugoo Choo-Choo".

The crowd then joined in a patriotic chorus of "Down with Yeltsin".

Tonight on Soviet TV

"What Did You Do In The War, Big Brother?"
How Soviet radio helped to win the war by establishing a reputation for fearless lying.

Those German VE Day Celebrations In Full



Victory Over England Day

Herr Reichsführer Kohl today took the salute in Berlin as thousands of goosestepping bankers celebrated the fall of the pound and the glorious triumph of the EU (Germany) over the last pockets of British resistance. *(That's enough celebrations. Ed.)*

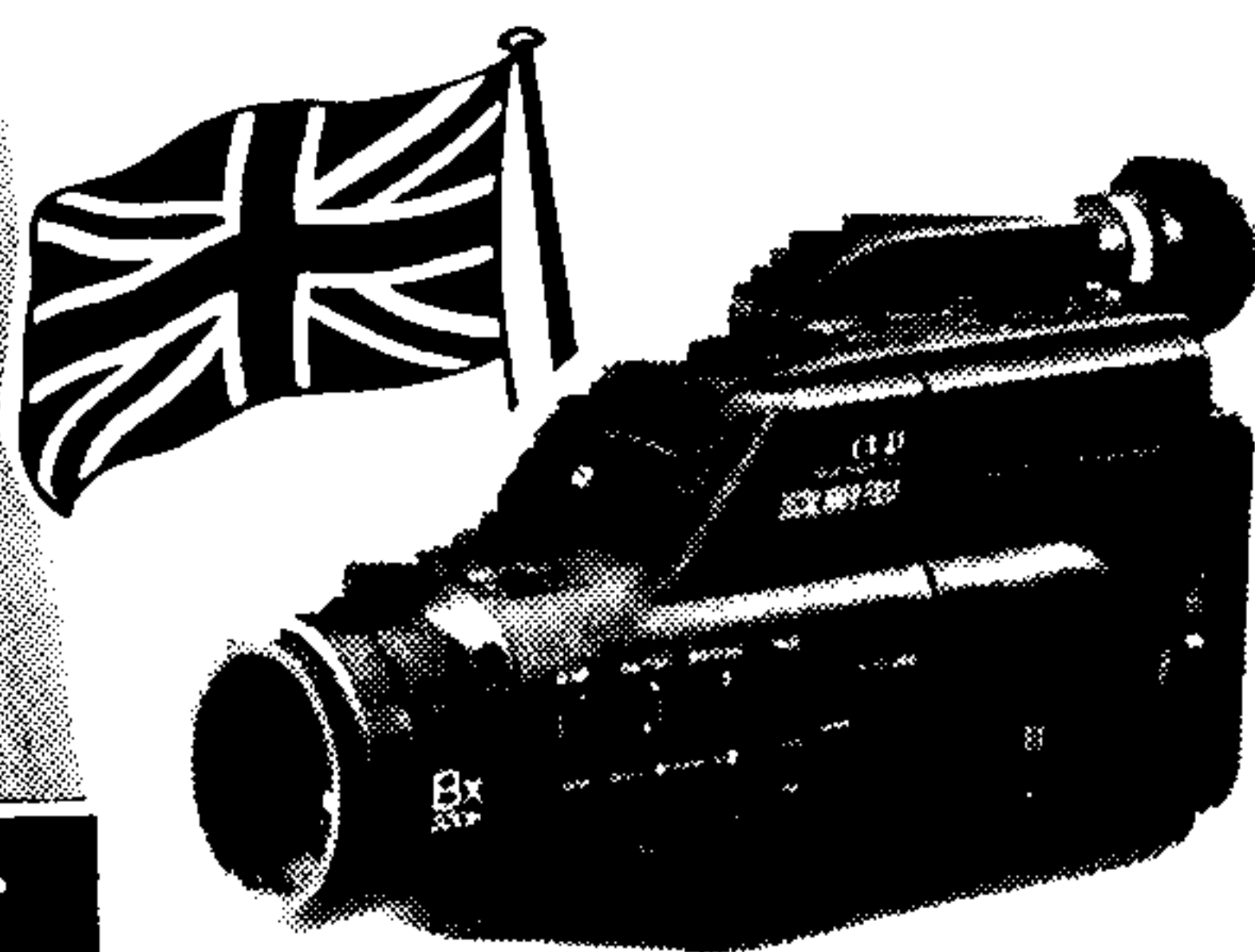
ADVERTISEMENT

Grand **VE** Warehouse Sale

To honour those who laid down their lives in World War II, British Gnome Stores are proud to offer the following items at **VERY** affordable prices



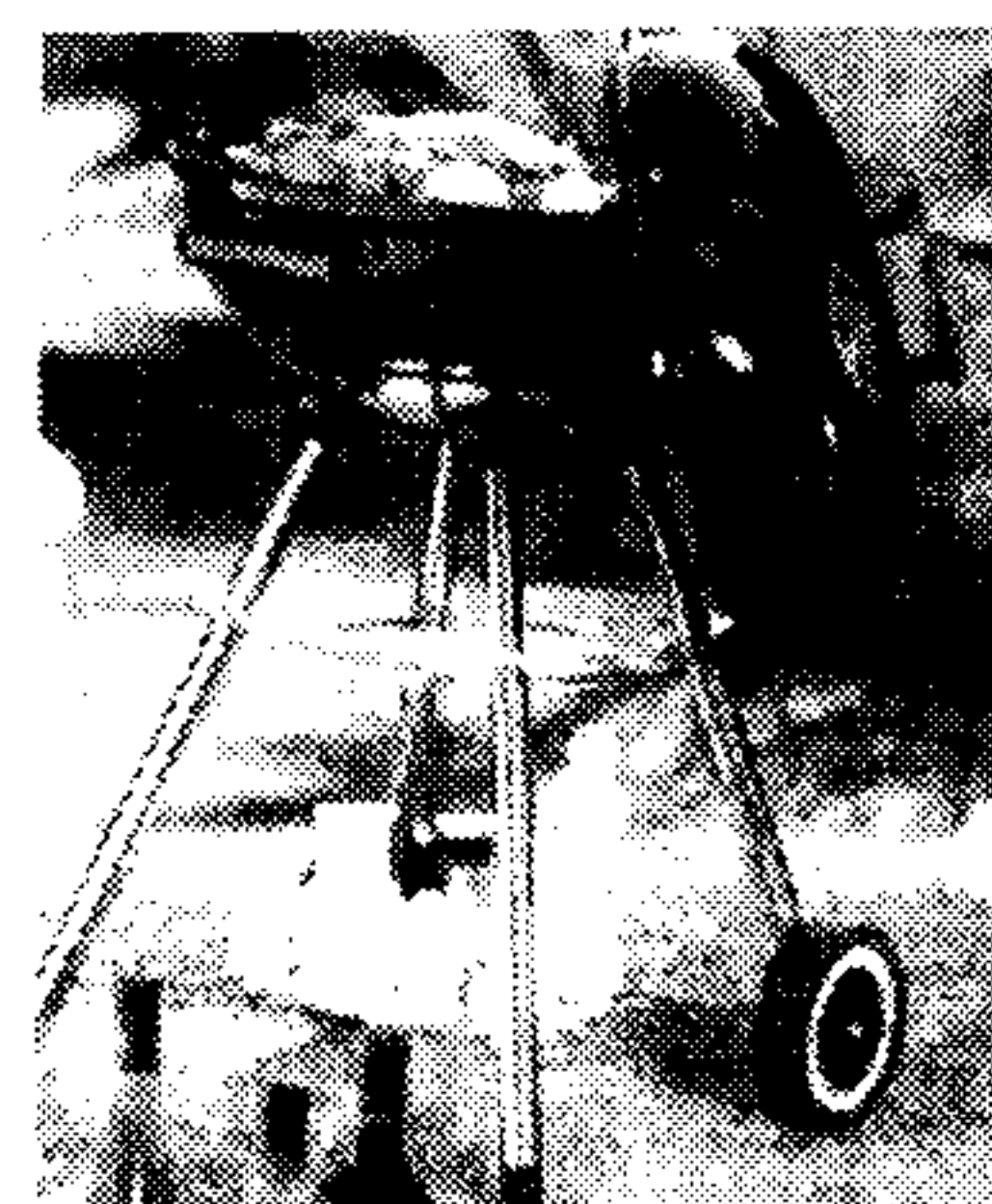
**MESSerschmitt
109 WASHING
MACHINE AND
TUMBLE-DRYER
WAS £186.99
NOW £185.99**



**THE "BUSHIDO
CAMIKAZICORDER
with 250mm Zoom
Lens and Self-Edit
WAS £499.99
NOW £599.99**

**1 CASE SPARKLING
VICHY WATER
WAS £24.60
NOW 60
Deutschmarks**

**FREE with each item
1 Winston Churchill
Freedom Mug
hand-crafted in the
Republic of China.**



**THE KLAUS
BARBICUE
Perfect for long summer
evenings. With 1 bag
easy-to-light "Charkohl"
WAS £13.50
NOW £13.50**

BRITISH GNOME STORES (UK) IS A SUBSIDIARY OF THE NISSAN CORPORATION, FRANKFURT

DIARY

It's me, yes, no, yes — yes, it's me, Chris Evans, Monsieur Christopherrrrrrr Evans, saying we've got a lot coming up in the next few paragraphs so stay reading, whatever you do stay reading. Bloke came up to me in a swanky club last night and said, "Hey, you Chris Evans?" What a nutter, eh? What-a-nutter! So I said, "Well, Thick Bloke, name one other person I could be?" — that shut him up, I can tell you! You Chris Evans indeed. Who else? You gotta laugh. Anyway, as I was saying, coming up soon we've got the real story behind what I was saying to myself before the show began and an update on what was happening in yesterday's show and later we've got our On The Bog slot and before that we've got Honk Your Horn and then in an actiononolio-packed show we've also got the regular Pissed My Pants item and of course our regular farting competition, yes it's our very own Blow Off Down The Blower. What a programme, it's so huge it'll make the girls gasp, and then they'll all be gagging for it eh? Hey! Stand back boys!

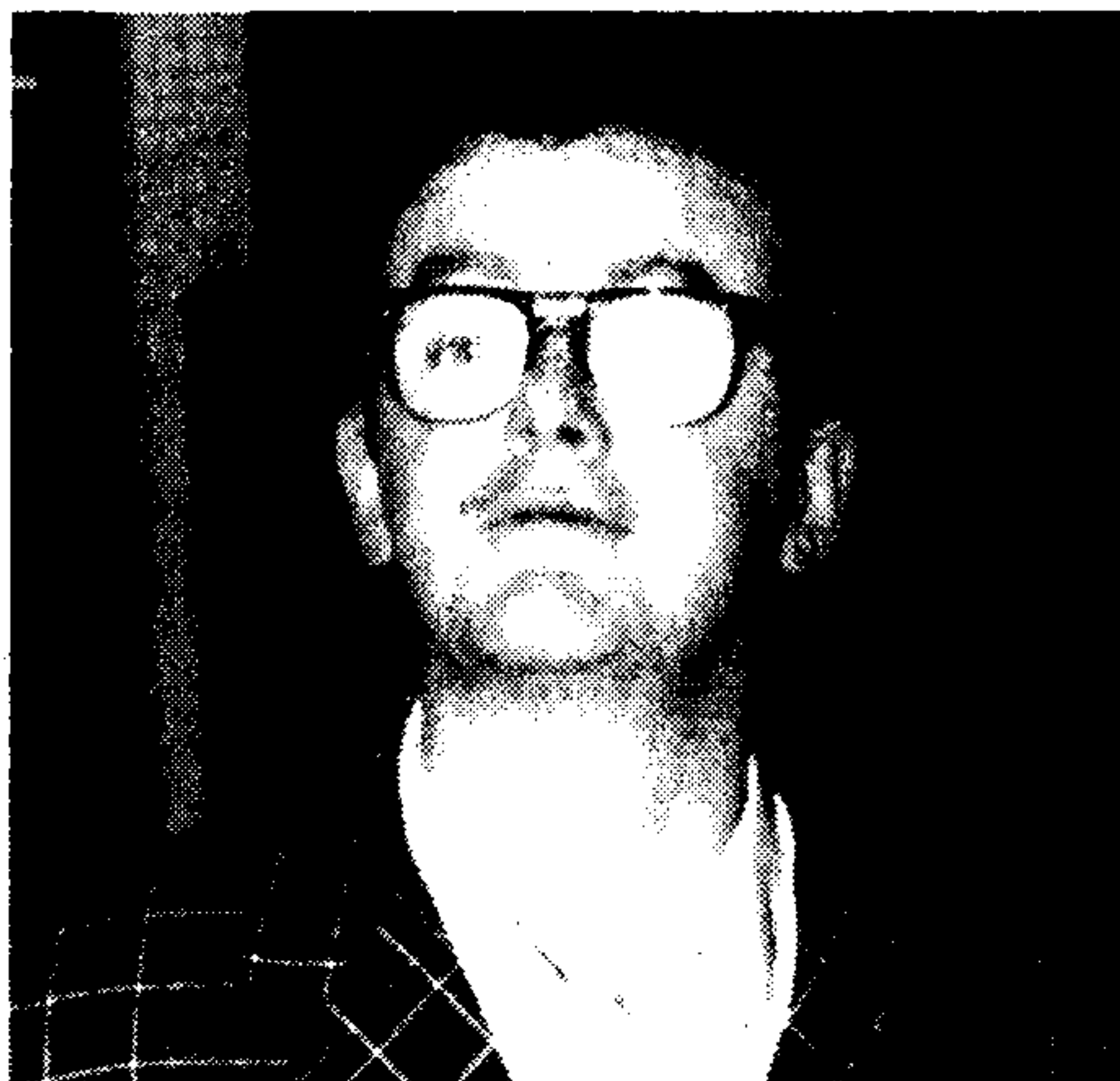
So like I said, coming up in the next few paragraphs we've got Honk Your Horn, we've got On The Bog, we've got Pissed My Pants and Blow Off Down The Blower and we've also got — yeah!!!! oooh-wooh! — we've also got the splendigorgeous Tina with the Traffic — wooh! How would you like to take my Two-Tonner up your service area, eh, Tina?! Hahahaha!

Tina: Hahahahahahah reely brilyernt Chris! News is just coming in of a major traffic pile-up involving an overturned lorry on the clockwise section of the M25 between junctions 8 and 9! Brilyernt!

I'd "pile up" on you any day in my overturned lorry, Tina! Hahahaha! Any tragic deaths, love?

Tina: Just a couple, I'm afraid, Chris.

Ah well, better than none at all, Tina — and I wouldn't mind "coupling" with you tonight either!!! Hahahaha, brilliant traffic news plus two tragic deaths from Tina there and coming up we've got music from Splurge, Toxic Poison, Adenoid, Squirm and Brain Dead plus the totally new single from Acne Triumphant plus all your fave regular slots like Slit Your Wrists Off where today's listener cuts his or her foot off and wins a brand new — wooh! — a spanking new I Slit My Wrists For Chris Evans exclusive Radio 1 T-Shirt, can't be bad, and also coming up soon is the Coming Up Soon slot, where I let



CHRIS EVANS

you know what's coming up in the next few minutes. What or who are you looking most forward to Coming Up, Tina? On second thoughts, don't answer that! Hahahaha!

Phew! What a weird weekend that was! Weeeeird! I mean, I met so many PEOPLE! Like, one two three four five six seven eight nine people, actually more like thirty or forty entirely new PEOPLE! And I'd like to say hello to everyone we met this weekend. I can't mention them all individually but I'd just like to say hello to them all, whoever they were, and they weren't anyone much, or else I'd be mentioning them individually, you can be sure of that! Hahahaha! And now it's Fact of the Day time again at four minutes to eight, and today's surprising fact is that It's Official — It's Unsafe to Eat Poisonous Snakes: doctors in Colorado have confirmed that it's unsafe to eat poisonous snakes — blimey! bet it is, I can't see myself tucking into a poisonous snake — I'm more a fish and chips with a few beers man meself! Tina — how'd you like to see my poisonous snake, love? Tongue out or in? Hahahaha! So to everyone I met at the weekend, we've got the latest from MC and the DMCs featuring X Ray and DSMs — and by the way, has that Liz Hurley got big bazookas or what? Only kidding, Liz! Over to Tina for the news right out UPFRONT at seventeen minutes past eight. Hahahaha, Tina?

Tina: And the biggest news today is that Take That have scheduled their new album for October, PLUS three hundred people have been killed in the latest outbreak of tragic

atrocities in the Bosnia region of the world and former James Bond man Roger Moore is set to make his screen comeback — only this time as a villain — all the details on these and other BIIG stories coming up soon — Chris!!?

Thanks, Teens. Now we've got Sue from Bridport on the phone, hi Sue, how y'doin?

Fine.

And where you from, Sue from Bridport?

Bridport!

Yeah! Wooh! And you're what? An ordinary housewife!

That's right Chris — an ordinary housewife!

And where did you say you were from, Sue?

From Bridport, Chris.

And your name is?

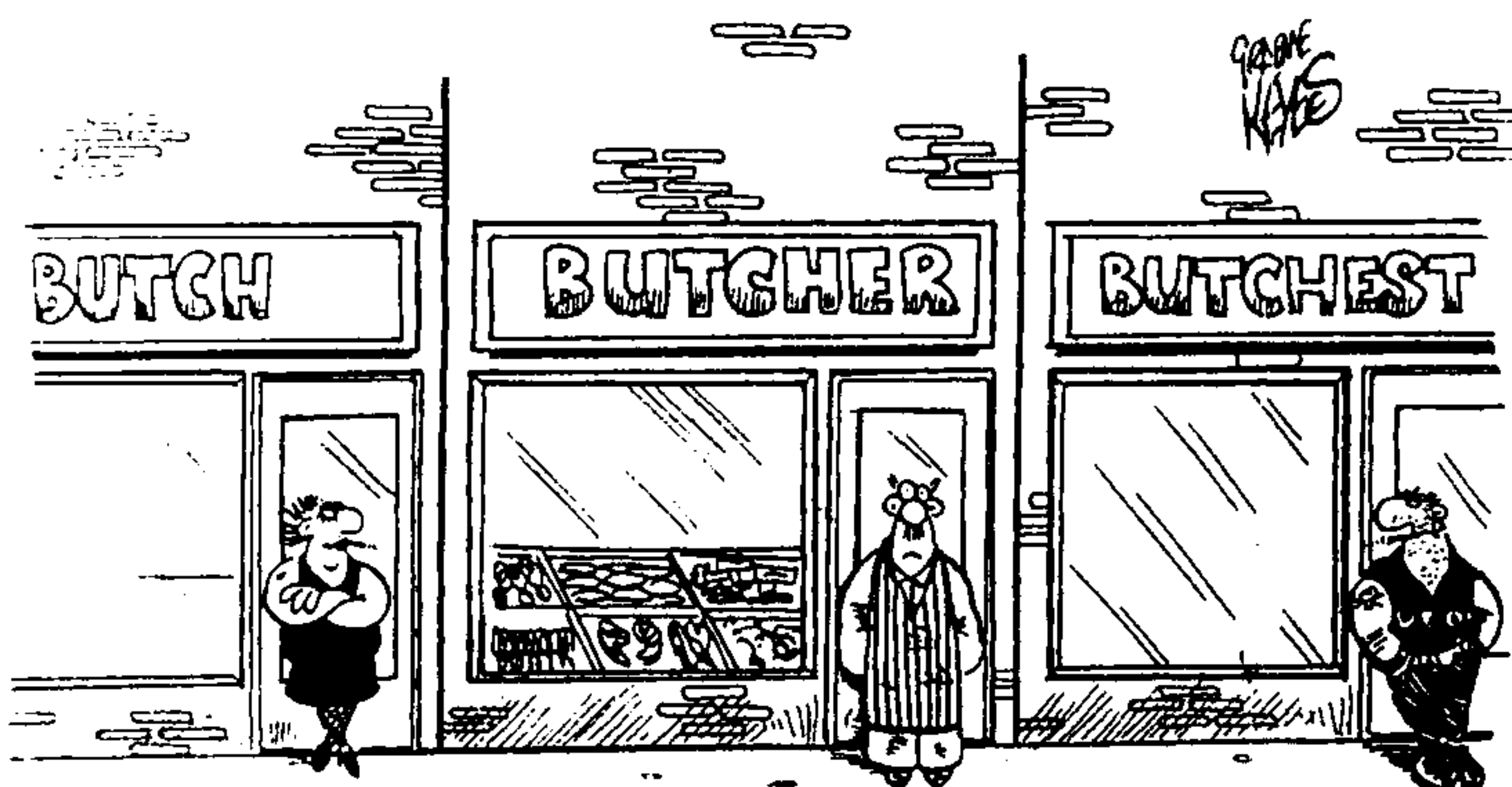
Sue.

And what did you say you did, Sue?

I'm an ordinary housewife, Chris.

Well, thanks Sue from Bridport — lovely talkin' to you, Sue — and you can suck my cock any day!!! And coming up soon, a major accident on the M6 and after I've finished talking the last thirty seconds or so of the latest huge single from Glum — all this, after this.

Shall I shut up? It'd be nice, wouldn't it, eh? Have I told you I'm happy? I haven't? Well, I am. Do you prefer oranges or lemons? Let us know — coming up soon, the number to ring. And what about that Liz Hurley? Wooh! And as I've said the Fact of the Day is now what was it? Oh well, if you know the capital of Singapore — like Michael Hutchence, he's a Singer Poor, gerrit? — then let us know, but the big question — it's really GINORMOUS, Tina, promise, gerremoff — is should I shut up? It'd be nice, wouldn't it, eh? But I can't, I can't, I can't — or else what would become of our move to take Radio 1 right upmarket — you can go up my market any time, Liz Hurley! — and to target a brand new kind of super-intelligentibobbles rock listener? Coming up soon, Blow Off Down The Blower, and I'll be giving you all the news of what I was up to last night, plus all the latest from the hunkiest motorway disasters around the country and the new single from Loathsome Shower. Are we having fun, or what?



In a report on March 24, concerning a court appearance by Councillor Thomas Sheridan on an alleged public order offence at the site of protests against the M77 motorway, The Herald stated Councillor Sheridan had been charged with moving into an area where tree felling was in progress and shouting: "Get the f... back."

This was due to an error by the agency which supplied the copy, which was used in good faith. Councillor Sheridan was in fact charged with shouting: "Get the fence back."

The Herald would like to correct any impression that Councillor Sheridan had been charged with using profanities in public, and apologise for any offence.

Glasgow Herald

Appalling

Labour scored a stunning triumph as Tony Blair's troops stormed into Tory heartlands to take control of councils they had never won before.

But today the Prime Minister emerged from Downing Street and declared: "I'm going nowhere."

Liverpool Echo

TWO SLEEPING hags, £10 each, one summer weight, one winter weight,

Taunton & Wellington Express & Star

Literary Review

Joyless Division

The Faber Book Of Pop
Hanif Kureishi
and Jon Savage (Eds)
(Faber, £16.99)

ROCK and roll I gave to you the best years of my life... And what, pray, did rock and roll send along in return? In the case of Mr Jonathan Sage (= "Jon Savage" — good innit?) who chanced upon an early Sex Pistols gig shortly after he came down from Cambridge and never looked back, an enviable niche as the historian of English popular music and a fat contract to compile *The Faber Book Of Pop*.

This is Jon's book, I reckon. Hanif is *The Face*, of course (sadly, both these hepcats are in their 40s now, but it can't be helped) and contributes his own amiable introduction, but it is among Jon's immensely sober prefatory remarks — headed "The Simple Things You See Are All Complicated" — that the heart of the endeavour resides. Pop isn't just pop, oh dear me no — if it were, all us serious young cultural historians would be out of a job.

For a start it's politics. "Since the mid-Seventies," Savage observes with his usual succinctness, "the New Right has launched a successful counter-attack on the sixties and thus, by direct implication, pop." And so on, through all the customary roadblocks of leftist cultural analysis. Savage has a point, of course: ideology and pop music are connected — how could they not be? Some of the sharpest snapshots of post-war national life are there in the lyrics of a Ray Davies or a Paul Weller, and dear old David Bowie used to burble on about fascism.

That said, if anything distinguishes the five decades' worth of contributions to *The Faber Book Of Pop*, it is a series of extraordinarily crass linkages between music and — uh — real life. Watch, for example, Simon Frith — godfather of the whole pop-sociology movement — trying to tease out some faint connections between an ensemble called Frankie Goes To Hollywood and the 1984 miners' strike: "Juxtaposed stereotypes — pickets as hooligans, gays lounging promiscuously in the

night." Consider a profound analysis of the iconic significance of Michael Jackson: "When society is floundering," says Lahr, "the machinery of celebrity works ever harder to produce a sense of the culture's greatness." Marvel at the conclusion of Simon Reynold's piece on something called "Ardkore Techno" (which I advise the home secretary to ban forthwith): "Speedfreak youth are literally running away from their problems. Do you blame them?" Perhaps not. But I certainly blame the people who make these glib pseudo-sociological generalisations about them.

As an approach, this is a tad exclusive. Pop? Yes, we're talking minority interests, guys. We're talking subculture — gays,

such a thing as mainstream pop any more, merely a bundle of competing constituencies. The same process of fragmentation applies to writing about pop, which in America reached its highpoint in the late 60s with *Rolling Stone*, and in England in the late 70s with the *New Musical Express*. Then, dreadful to relate, critics like Paul Morley and Ian Penman discovered "theory"; the centre broke apart and the consequences are with us in unreadable modern pop papers like *Melody Maker*. Ominously the best current pop journalism tends to appear in oldster coffee table magazines like *Q* and *Mojo*.

For which, one gathers, Mr Savage doesn't particularly care. There are some choice offerings here — 60s chats with the Beatles, an instructive essay about Northern Soul — but the giants of English rock journalism are unrepresented — no Nick Kent, a single slice of concert reporting from the incomparable Charles Shaar Murray — and the skimmings of the last 10 years are often heart-rendingly bad.

Earnestness, too, tends to elbow aside celebration — worrying as it

biography of the boy Mark by Messrs Paul Halloran and Mark Hollingsworth.

He summoned the manager forthwith. "You are breaking the law!" he yelled triumphantly. "That book has been injunctioned by a member of the Kuwaiti royal family. You must remove it at once!" Within moments, every copy of the offending tome had disappeared.

Prince's glee is understandable since he blames Halloran for trying to get him sacked from the *Sunday Express* a few years ago. But the publisher, Simon & Schuster, may be rather less pleased since it has now been obliged to recall the book and reprint it at vast expense.

Halloran himself is even angrier. Last Friday morning, after *Independent* hack Chris Blackhurst had broken the news that Ms Souad al-Sabah was applying for an injunction, Halloran rang him and demanded to know his source. When Blackhurst declined to help, Halloran turned distinctly threatening — even resorting to his well-known catchphrase: "I know where you live, Blackhurst," he growled.

But Halloran has no one to blame but himself. In the preface to *Thatcher's Gold*, he cheekily observed that Mark Thatcher's solicitors, Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners, had assigned their senior partner Alasdair Pepper to "keep a running brief on our book's progress". "Despite Mark Thatcher's use of Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners, we have not yet had the pleasure of any communication from Mr Pepper," he crowed. "But it's early days!"

Now that his book has been pulped, he may regret this taunt. For the solicitors who obtained an injunction on behalf of Souad al-Sabah were none other than Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners.

Halloran's problems may not be over. For questions are now being asked about his relationship with Wolfgang "Wally" Michel, a London-based tycoon who has made a fortune in the arms industry and is handsomely acknowledged in the preface to *Thatcher's Gold*. ("We are particularly grateful to Wolfgang Michel for his generous support and insights into the defence world.") What form did this "generous support" take? Halloran does not elaborate. But it may be worth pointing out that for the past couple of years Halloran's London "office" has been a handsome mews house in Belgravia — and that, according to the electoral register, this address is the residence of one Wolfgang Michel.



skinheads, gender-bending and longhairs against the criminal justice act: all the good brave causes, which sometimes have very little to do with music. A revealing test for anyone over 30 who imagines this just might be a touch unrepresentative, a touch detached from the mainstream, is to think of your teenage years. Glam rock. Guitar heroes. Progressive rock. Heavy metal. You won't find much about them here — though there is a great deal about "rave culture" — and it is no doubt significant (to the compilers, if not to anyone else) that in a work of 800 pages a cross-dressing one-hit wonder named Marilyn can somehow garner more index references than The Jam.

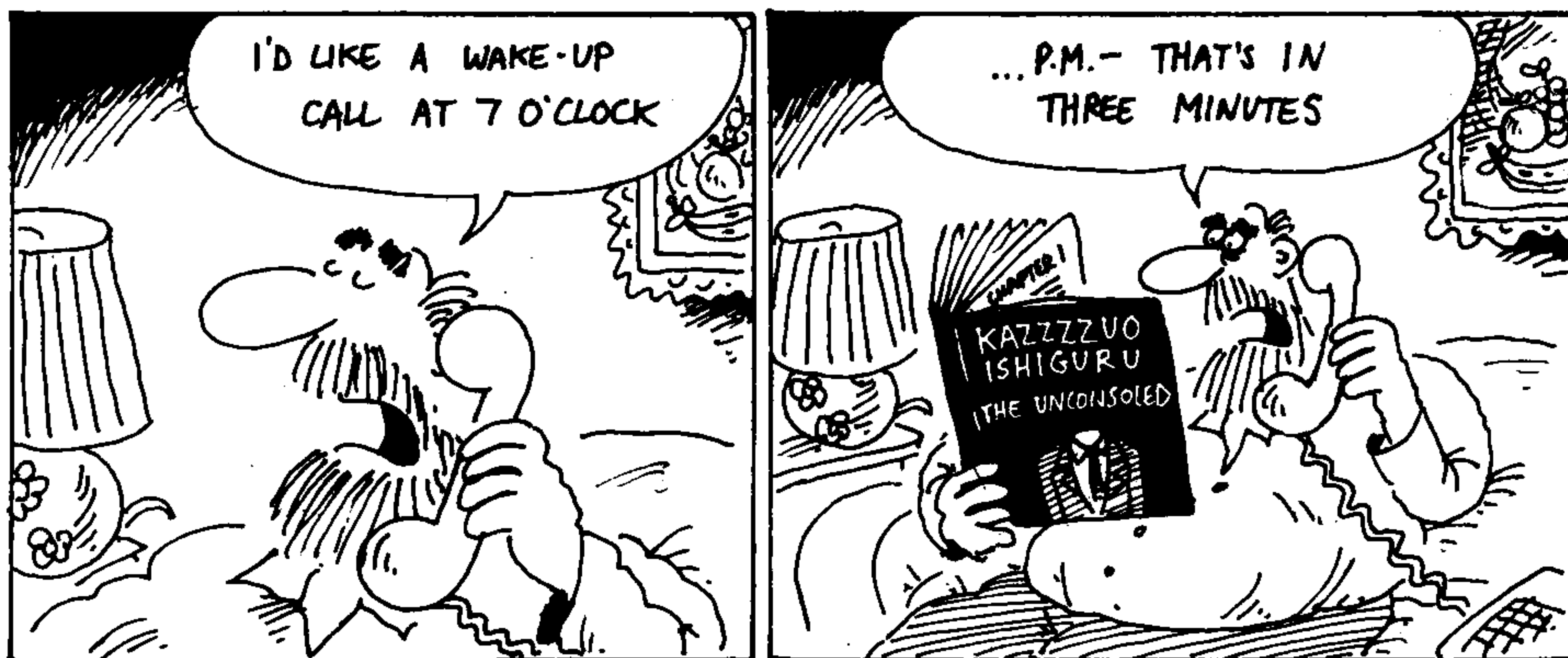
Nothing wrong with bypassing the mainstream, perhaps. As a glance at the charts — and at record sales — invariably shows, there is scarcely

may sound, the majority of us are simply fans, I mean *we just like the stuff* — leaving only cynical analyses of The Biz and joyless thesis-mongering. Interestingly, Jon could recently be found in the *Guardian* complaining that the current crop of soccer nostalgia buffs — Nick Hornby et al — were simply making the game middle-class. What on earth does he imagine he's done to pop? Hanif must be kicking himself.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

WALKING into a London bookshop last Friday afternoon, former *Sunday Express* City editor Dominic Prince espied a large pile of copies of *Thatcher's Gold*, the new



REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

Book: *Charles The Untold Story* by Ross Benson, published by Victor Gollancz in 1993.

Advance: A whopping £80,000.

Original price: £14.99

Now: £3.00

Spotted: Lovejoys Booksellers.

'Bookworm'

footnotes

THE CHURCH'S BUM FOUNDATION

THE timing of the publication of the Nolan report on 11 May came as a great relief to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his fellow bishops. It pushed out of the newspapers the Commons debate on the same day one of the most remarkable achievements of the Church of England this century: the loss of £800 million through gambling with borrowed money on reckless property speculation.

The debate followed the Commons social security select committee's report last March. Everyone who gave evidence to the committee for the church made it clear that they were very sorry about the scandal but had absolutely no idea how it came about. Typical was an exchange between the Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn and Sir Michael Coleman, the first Church Estates commissioner. Corbyn asked about the most spectacular of the Church's bum investments: at Ashford Great Park in Kent where £80 million of ordinary Christians' money was poured into the pockets of property speculators on a development for which planning permission was refused.

Corbyn: From an outsider or lay person's point of view and as a former planning committee chair, it seems to me pretty crazy to invest that amount of money if you have not had permission to build.

Coleman: I am not disagreeing with you.

Q: Why was it done?

A: I have no idea.

Sir Michael kept saying he was not in office at the time of the scandal and so could not reply to detailed questions about it. Tory MP Peter Thurnham then asked him:

Q: Who did resign, then, because they were not happy?

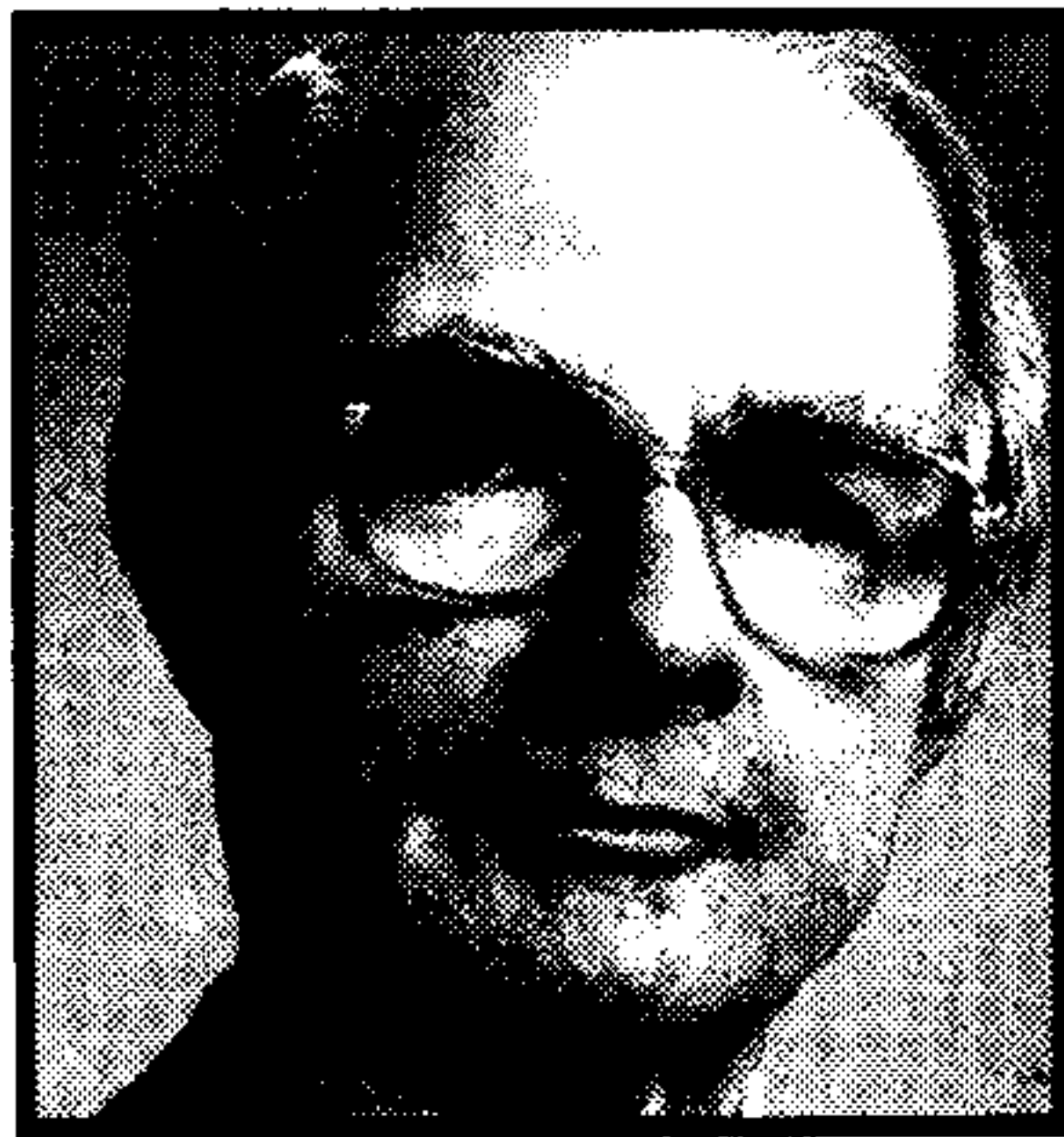
A: Indeed I am not aware that anybody did.

Q: The whole thing stinks. I feel very unhappy about the whole set-up.

A: So you should be.

The same sort of answer came from all the church representatives at the committee: Sir Douglas Lovelock, former first Commissioner; the Bishop of Chelmsford; Patrick Locke, secretary to the commissioners, and the archbishop himself, who said the first he knew his church had lost £800 million was when he read about it in an article by John Plender in the *Financial Times*.

Not much more light was shed on the matter by a special report from Coopers & Lybrand, the accountants sensitively chosen to investigate the scandal even though they had audited all the church's subsidiary companies which gambled so disastrously



HEAR NO EVIL :
Sir Michael Coleman



SEE NO EVIL :
Sir Douglas Lovelock



SPEAK NO EVIL :
The Bishop of Chelmsford

on the property schemes; nor by the report by the big pensions actuaries R. Watson, whose senior partner was none other than Mr Howard Gracey, chairman of the Church of England pensions board; nor by the report of the "Lambeth Group" set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury which met in secret and included as an adviser that paragon of sound British banking, Mr Peter Baring, then (but no longer) chairman of Barings. Absolutely no one appeared before the committee who could give even half an explanation as to how the church's millions came to be squandered on a series of vast and grotesque property speculations.

In exasperation Frank Field's committee recommended that the archbishop set up a special independent inquiry into the Ashford scandal. In the unlikely event of such an inquiry, the following people would make admirable witnesses.

Landau Ahoy!

MR MARTIN LANDAU, a colourful property speculator who lives in Monte Carlo. It was Landau's company Imry, which originally proposed that the church invest heavily in a partnership with him and another entrepreneur, Jim Cookson of European Land, to take part in the calamitous development at Ashford. Landau had persuaded the church to part with its money on several other property developments, none of which was specially successful. His policy was to ensure that he, the developer, took any profits which might be available but off-loaded any risk. Discussing this policy in the *FT* much later, Landau confessed: "A lot of people think I am a rat." Rat or no, his policy worked wonders. For him. Large chunks of the church's £80 million poured into the Ashford development ended up in the coffers of the developers. In effect the "ordinary men and women in the pew" lobbed out a multi-million subsidy to two developers. Landau admitted later that he knew perfectly

well the property bubble of the late 1980s was about to burst. "I said 1989 would be terrible," he confessed, "1990 would be blood on the walls and 1991 would be jumping out of windows." When the property market did indeed collapse, Landau lost no blood and did not jump out of any windows. In the nick of time before Imry was swallowed up in the property collapse and went bust, he sold Imry to more gullible speculators and cleared £25 million.

Two bust men

Cookson's European Land went bust, too – leaving the Church of England with a stretch of valueless agricultural land in Kent, and with all the bills to pay. Eye readers will recall how Mr Landau has recently stormed back into the British property market with a new company, Development Securities. His fellow directors include Lord McAlpine, the former treasurer of the Tory party, and David Rowe-Beddoe, an active Conservative party worker who also has a home in Monte Carlo and who was recently appointed chairman of the Welsh Development Agency to clean up its sleazy image.

MICHAEL HUTCHINGS was full-time property consultant to the Church of England. His eccentricities include a fear of flying and a predilection for travel by luxury cruise liner. He was instrumental in the decisions to invest church money in partnerships with Martin Landau and Jim Cookson, but he did not appear at any of the public hearings on the scandal.

Nor did **WILLIAM WELLS**, senior partner of the big estate agents Chestertons, who also advised the church on its property developments. Exactly what role did Chestertons play in the developments?

Such questions were not asked in the House of Commons and should be asked and answered in public by the archbishop's still-to-be appointed inquiry. If they are not answered, there will be plenty of ordinary worshippers who will be wondering whether in their Father's house there are, after all, many mansions – and whether the main point of those mansions is to speculate about them to the impoverishment of the church and the enrichment of property speculators.



DO NO EVIL :
Martin Landau



LOCKERBIE: Play it again, Tam

■ A NEW stage has been reached in the great Lockerbie cover-up. Until now, important questions about the bombing have not been answered. Now they cannot even be asked.

On 9 May Labour MP Tam Dalyell, who is sceptical about the official version of what happened at Lockerbie, put down six questions to the Scottish secretary Ian Lang. All were refused by the Table Office, which made it clear that any detailed questions about likely evidence in any forthcoming court case would be banned.

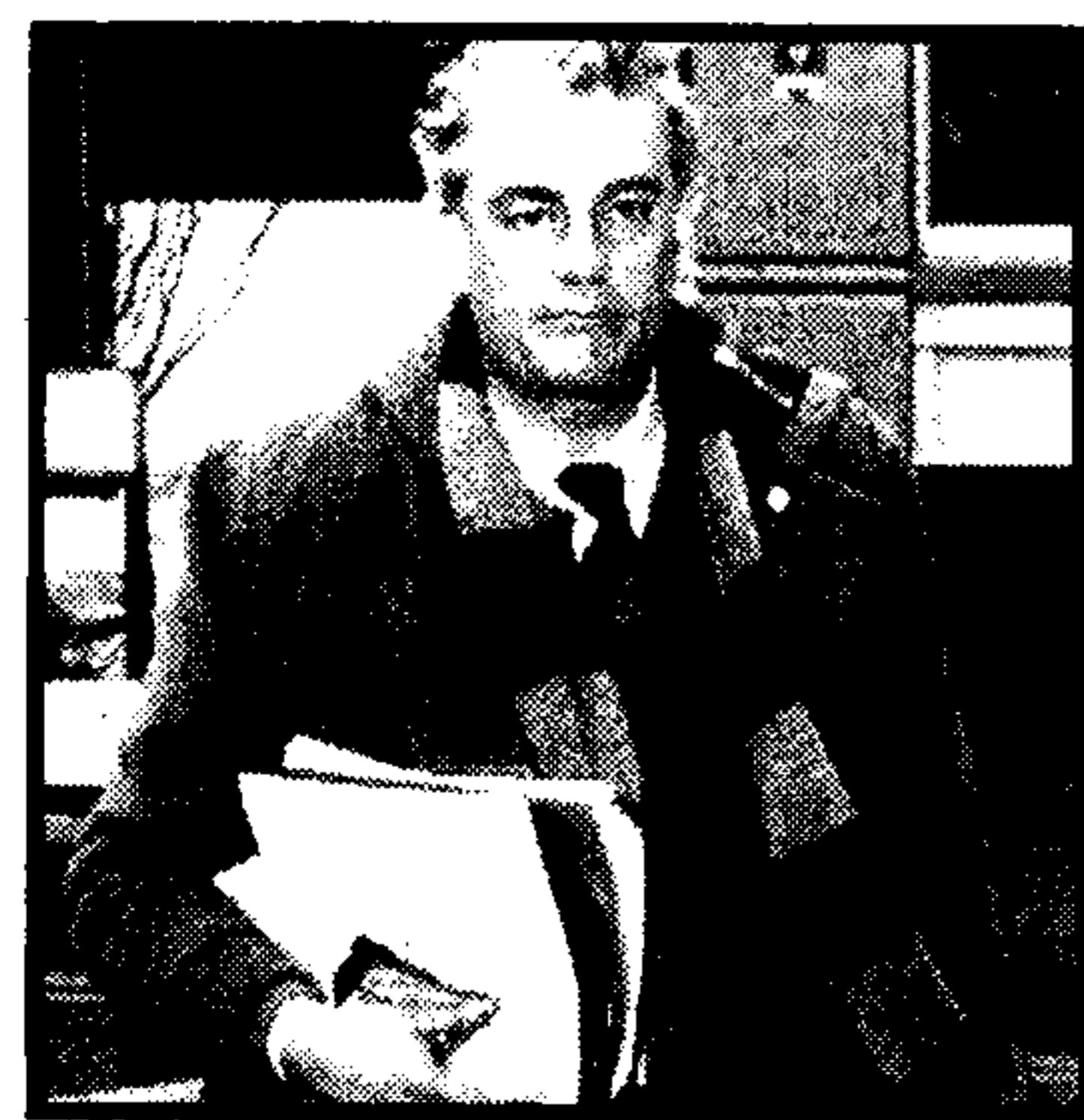
Dalyell sent his questions for publication in the *Eye*. Four of them are about the central piece of forensic evidence which, it is claimed, points to Libya as the source of the bomb which knocked out the airliner over Lockerbie. This is a tiny chip from a timing device allegedly

found in a forest near Lockerbie. The timing device, it is claimed, was manufactured by a Swiss firm and sold to Libya.

This "evidence" was slightly tainted when the head of the Swiss firm, Edwin Bollier, said that a lot of his timers had gone not to Libya but to East Germany; and that anyway he has never been shown the fragment itself, only a picture of it. Until he sees the fragment itself, he says, he can't possibly say whether or not it is part of one of his timers. Dalyell asked why Bollier was not shown the device and what was its colour. These questions go to the root of the Lockerbie mystery, but they are not even allowed on the Commons order paper.

Dalyell's two other questions were about Marwan Khreesat, who for nearly three years after the bombing was named by all the authorities as the bombmaker.

Khreesat was arrested by German police but was suddenly and mysteriously released after a court hearing. The FBI interviewed him, but Scottish police were not allowed to do so. Dalyell asked what information the Scottish police were given about the FBI interrogation of Khreesat and what the secretary of state was told about Khreesat's mysterious release. All vital questions. All banned.



GAGGED: Tam Dalyell M.P.

NCP – NASTY CALLOUS PIGS

■ JAKE WILLIAMS, a Scottish forester, writes to the *Eye* about an unhappy confrontation with National Car Parks.

In January he flew into London from the United States but had to wait for 12 hours for a bus to Aberdeen. Exhausted, he found some cardboard at the back of a shop near the National Car Park by Victoria coach station, "tunnelled into the heap with my sleeping bag and slept for a few hours".

Soon after waking, Mr Williams was confronted by a security guard from NCP who ordered him to move off. Before he had a chance to do so, the guard turned a powerful fire hose on him. The hosing went on and on, despite Mr Williams's anguished protests. In a final flourish the guard then proceeded to soak all Williams's luggage.

When Williams called

over two policemen, the NCP man explained: "That's what we always do to dossers." The police seemed bored and refused to take any action. Ever since, Mr Williams has been trying to get some compensation for his belongings and his mandolin which was ruined beyond repair.

National Car Parks insurers, Royal Insurance, wrote to say: "We have found no evidence to suggest our insured has committed an act of negligence." (No one had ever said it had: an act of reckless and inexcusable violence was what Williams alleged).

The *Eye* asked NCP whether its guards were in the habit of turning fire hoses on people they think are "dossers" – even when the "dossers" are not on NCP premises. The question went all the way up to the board of directors, who passed down a very helpful answer: "No comment".

PS: Sir Donald Gosling, joint chairman of National Car Parks, knighted by Harold Wilson in the notorious "lavender list honours", is a multi-millionaire with several agreeably large houses and a yacht. When he divorced in 1988 he bought his wife a farm in Hampshire for a sum believed to be £2 million.



JAKE WILLIAMS

Bone of contention

■ UNABASHED by enormous fines and widespread sackings following its disastrous selling of private pensions in the early 1990s, the Norwich Union has launched a new campaign to sell private health apparently with the same sort of tactics.

The April issue of *Reading Matters*, the internal journal of the General Council and Register of Osteopaths, carries a "warning" to all members as follows:

"It has been reported that a representative purporting to be from Norwich Union approached a member requesting a list of patients' names and addresses. It was proposed that the representa-

tive would write to all the patients on the member's headed notepaper offering them medical insurance cover at a discounted rate. In return some commission would be paid to the member.

"It was alleged that this was a nationwide initiative by Norwich Union targeting patients of alternative therapies. Members need no reminding that to participate in such a scheme would represent a flagrant breach of confidentiality which could have serious consequences both for an individual and for the profession."

Sounds like a case for the Association of British Insurers, and its chairman Alan Bridgewater, group chief executive of - the Norwich Union.

ACCA bilked!

■ A TERRIBLE thing has happened to the ACCA, the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, which is a frightfully prestigious organisation with 45,000 members and 111,000 students.

Some impertinent certified accountant has gone through its accounts – and so shocked was he by what he found he complained to the accountants' bugbear, Mr Austin Mitchell MP.

Mitchell has written to Mrs Anthea Rose, ACCA's secretary, to

point out a few alarming facts:

- In 1991, funds and reserves stood at £8.574 million. Somehow that has come down to £4.31 million.

- Net current liabilities are up in a single year from £2.2 million to £3.6 million.

- Bank overdraft is up in a single year from £928,000 to £2.178 million.

- In 1993, investments in "educational development set-up costs" (probably including the disastrous Accountancy TV company) were

written off to the tune of £1.485 million.

- £46,000 was spent on trips overseas by officers of the association and their families. There is no detail in the accounts of where, when and why.

Mr Mitchell wants to know what would have happened to a "commercial concern displaying the same financial difficulties", and where he should complain about "auditors' incompetence." The letter went on April 24. Any reply will be passed on.

OH MY, P.A.

IN ITS rush to privatise the public's only source of information about the accounts and directors of companies, the department of trade is spending a lot of public money on a firm of private consultants, PA Consulting. This is the same PA Consulting which, according to the *Mail on Sunday* on 7 May, "is being investigated by the taxman for back tax, penalties and interest in excess of £10m".



In the City

FOR ONCE it would seem that old "Changi Jim" Slater has been more sinned against than sinning — this time on the other side of the world in New Zealand, where such an operation is somewhat easier to pull off.

Since last year considerable excitement, something of a contradiction in terms where New Zealand is concerned, has been generated by the arrival of new shareholders promising deals at locally quoted minnow Lectrica Holdings, a one-time Wellington lighting company.

Cause of the excitement, which saw the share price double, was the announcement last May that the "Slater Group" had acquired a 47 percent interest. The "Slater Group" was described in documents filed with the New Zealand stock exchange as a Jersey-based private investment banking group. No other information was provided, however, as to its directors or shareholders.

But this omission did not stop almost instant reports appearing in the Kiwi press to the effect that "Jim's in". He was described as the head of the Slater Group, which was conveniently said to be a "corporate strategist and asset manager". The great man did not, however, surface as a director of his new venture. Instead a variety of New Zealand and American individuals joined the Lectrica board.

This was not altogether surprising as it emerges that there is no "Slater Group" registered in Jersey. Furthermore, it is said not to be known at the address, that of company managers Trident Trust, given in New Zealand documents and on letterheads as its office! (Offshore companies registered in even less reputable venues than Jersey often choose a more established haven as a post box address). And a signature suggested to be that of "Jim Slater" bares no resemblance to that of the great investment guru and convicted Companies Act offender.

Perhaps not too much of another surprise therefore that more recently those involved with Lectrica have been downplaying the Slater connection. In January it was announced that the mysterious "Slater Group" had transferred most or all of its stake to a British trust. Suddenly it was said that "Changi Jim" was not involved with Lectrica but he "had had some association with Slater Group in the past".

Post all the Slater hype, Lectrica is now said to be negotiating to acquire small Yorkshire based financial services group Helmsley Acceptances using the services of London financial adviser U.K. Securities, which coincidentally happens to be controlled from Jersey. Its directors include New Zealand merchant banker Stephen Lunn, plus assorted Swedish and British associates.

All very strange... or maybe not! After all, even faraway in New Zealand they know how to ramp shares. And there are few better names to use in a ramp than that of the man who all but invented the operation — even if Jim isn't in.

A LITTLE known remarkable coincidence is that both Andrew Tuckey, late of Barings, and Rupert Pennant-Rea, late of the Bank of England, grew up in Zimbabwe and are said to

have been friends both there and many years later in the City. No wonder Tuckey was so confident that fateful weekend in February that the Bank would come to Barings' rescue.

He was wrong about that, of course; but at least Rupert seems to have swallowed the "rogue trader" fiction that Nick Leeson did it all without his bosses, such as Tuckey, back in London knowing anything about his kamikaze deals on the Japanese market.

When not bonking the night away in Eddie George's gubernatorial private room, Pennant-Rea was notionally in charge of the Bank's supervisory role. Doubtless he would have been uninfluenced by any past friendships when examining Barings' massive capital movements out East to cover the Leeson positions which would seem to breach the banking act rules. Just what and who at the Bank knew and when they knew it awaits to be told in the report from the Bank's own supervisory board.

IT IS surely appropriate that the man in the high court wielding the simple scimitar of truth, Jonathan Al-Aitken bin Fahd, should turn to a fellow rightwinger to pursue his crusade.

Al-Aitken's chosen lawyer in his bid to rid the world of the infidels from the *Guardian* and *World in Action* is none other than that old friend of *Private Eye*, Richard Sykes.

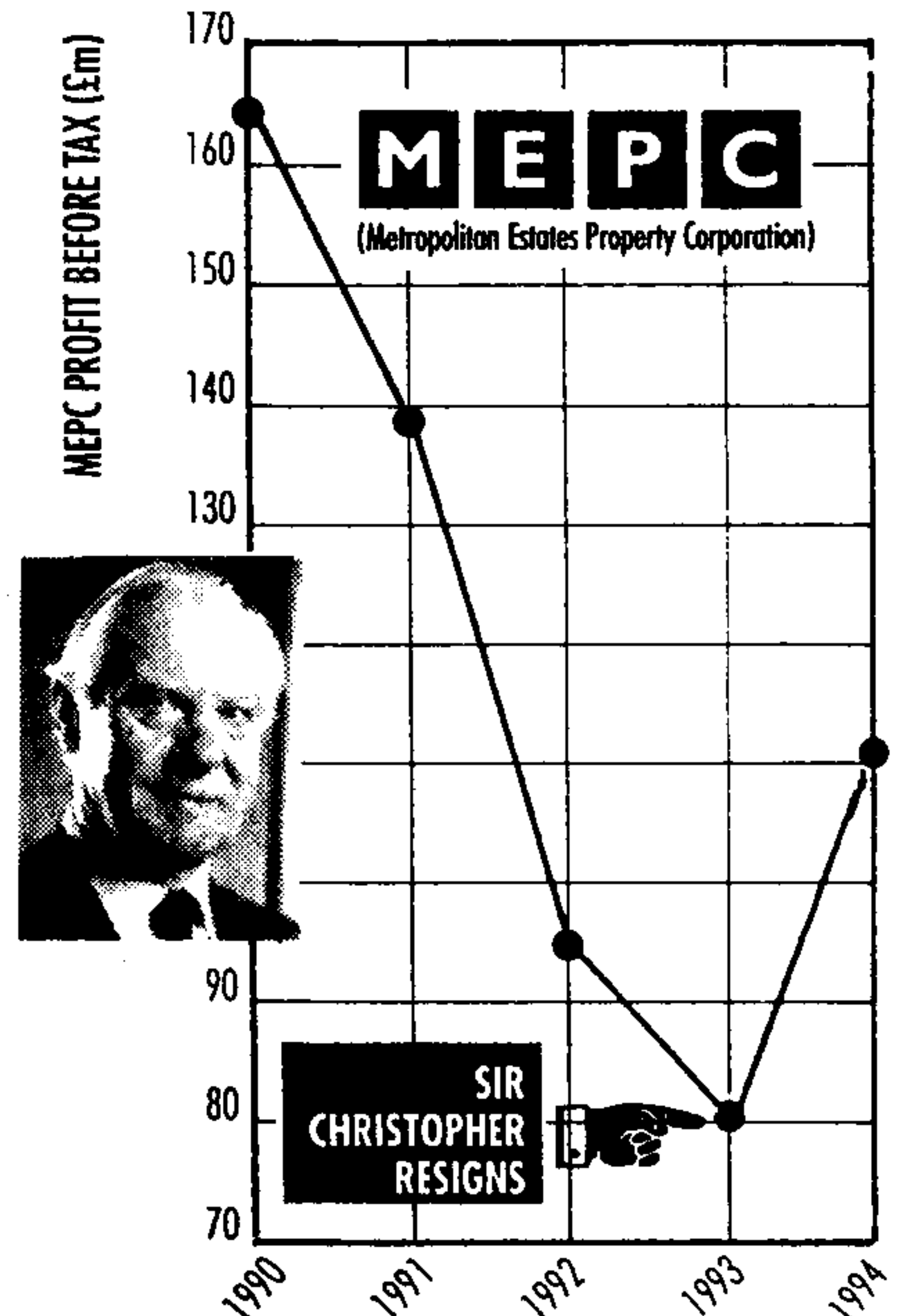
Long a subscriber to ultra-conservative views, Sykes would seem an odd choice for a senior government minister, but for the fact that they have had a long association. For some of Sykes's past clients are hardly fit and proper company for Al-Aitken. Take, for example, the fugitive share swindler Chander Singh of Ravendale infamy whom Sykes represented, along with his equally discredited associate Edward Dunn, in costly losing libel actions against the *Eye* and the *Observer*. Al-Aitken had best hope that Sykes's performance in those cases is not repeated... or the world will not indeed be made safe for arms dealers and their remittance men.

HOW touching that the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* continue to defend the phoney Pharaoh Mohamed Fayed against persecution by the Tory government which refuses to grant him British nationality. Such loyalty could have nothing to do with the fact that the *Guardian* will need to rely on Fayed for its defence against former Ritz devotees Neil Hamilton and Al-Aitken, while Fayed is the *Mail's* landlord. As to the government's so far unspecified grounds for refusing him a British passport, how about being a liar who deceived government departments and City regulators? Not of course that this ever stood in the way of accepting political donations or personal hospitality... a giant helping of hypocrisy which may yet cause the home office even greater embarrassment.

GLENBURN Enterprises, the company that provides the freelance services of former *Sunset Times* editor turned columnist Andrew Neil, would seem to have had a somewhat less successful year in 1993. Turnover (fees) fell from £177,000 to a mere £97,500. And profits collapsed from £101,000 to just £1,700. But before you rush for your cheque book, note that the company acquired a freehold property for

British Management Part 18.

SIR CHRISTOPHER BENSON KBE FRICS, Chairman Sun Alliance. Former Chairman London Docklands Development Corporation and the Housing Corporation. Chairman MEPC until 1993.



MEPC profit before tax		1992	£95.2m
1990	£163.7m	1993	£81.0m
1991	£139.1m	1994	£111.2m

£423,000 without the aid of a mortgage but funded by a director's loan of £410,000. And the property is now let and providing an income.

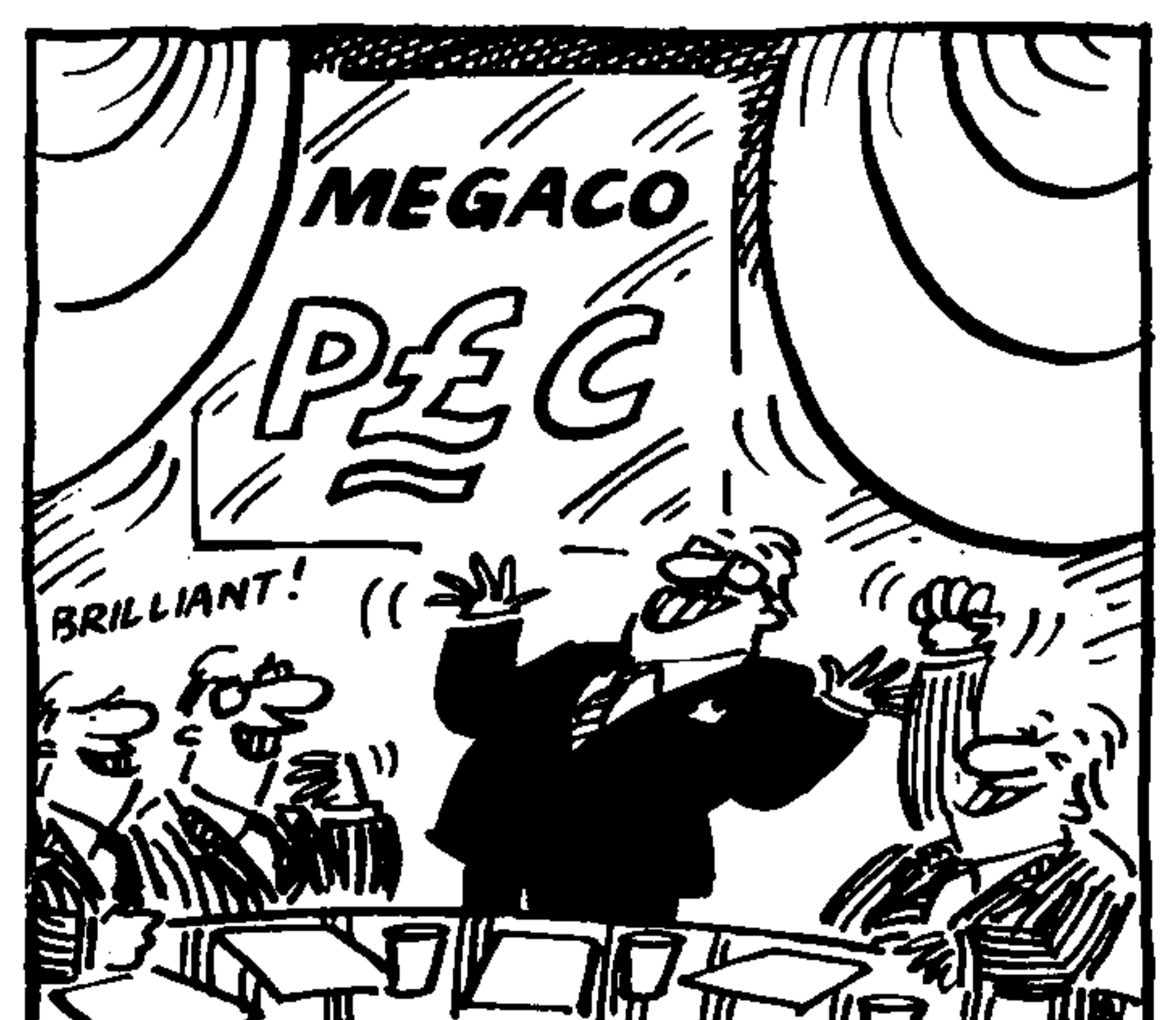
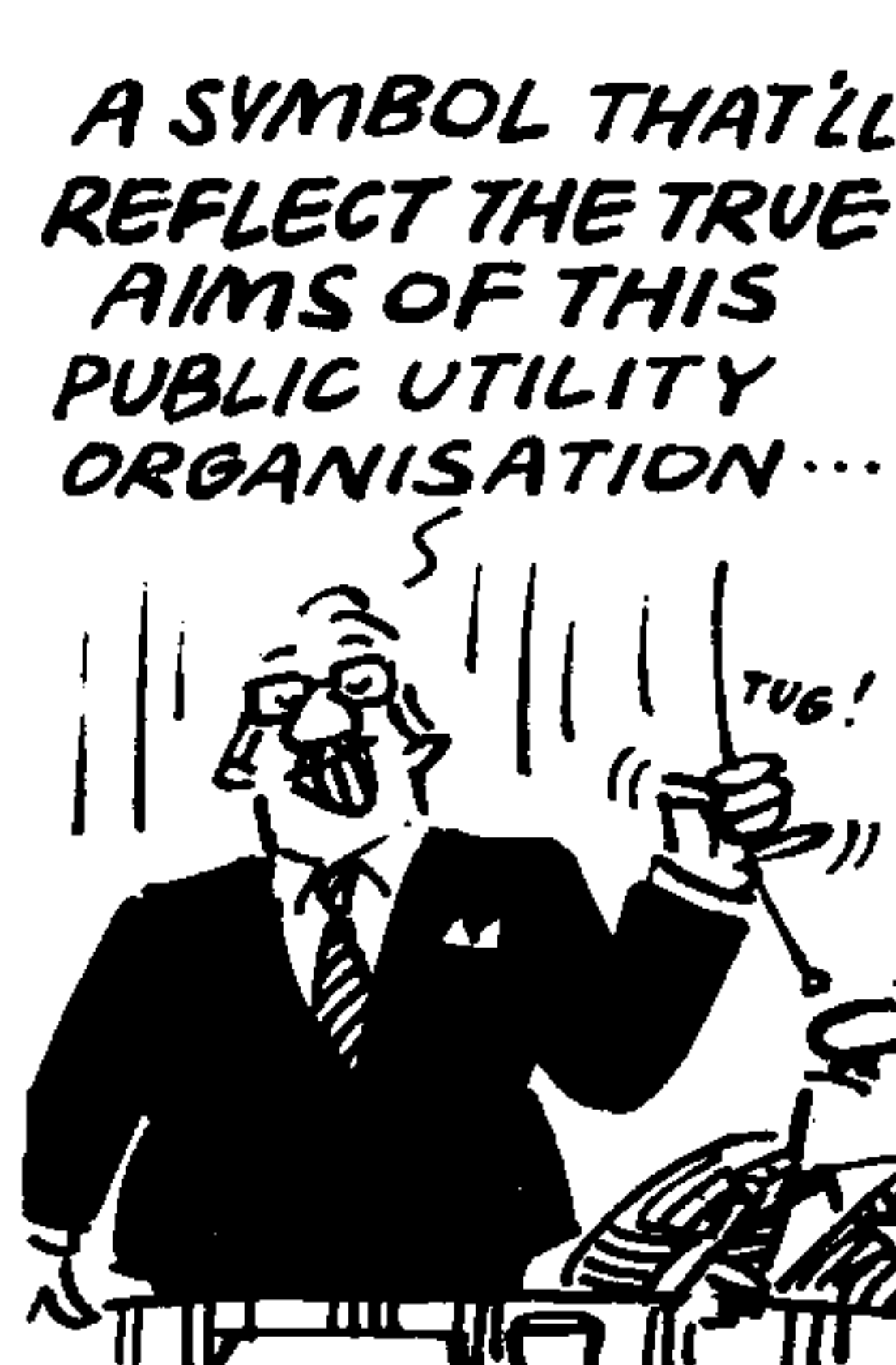
SOME interesting names seem to lurk behind Tom Hoskins Brewery, the product of a management buyout last December from the listed Hoskins Brewery now renamed Halkin Holdings.

Among those financing the deal and taking up 18 percent of the shares was Etablissement pour le Placement Privée of Zurich, a name not unconnected with former bankrupt Herbert Towner, against whom there should be a health warning to investors. Most recently the Swiss company featured as holding some of Towner's shares in Faxcast Broadcast Corporation.

No wonder, therefore, there is speculation that also somewhere in the Hoskins deal might be none other than Towner's old Bestwood pal, Tony Cole. Not that Cole can appear up front anywhere after receiving a two-year (suspended) sentence and a 10-year disqualification as a director for stealing more than £1 million from Bestwood.

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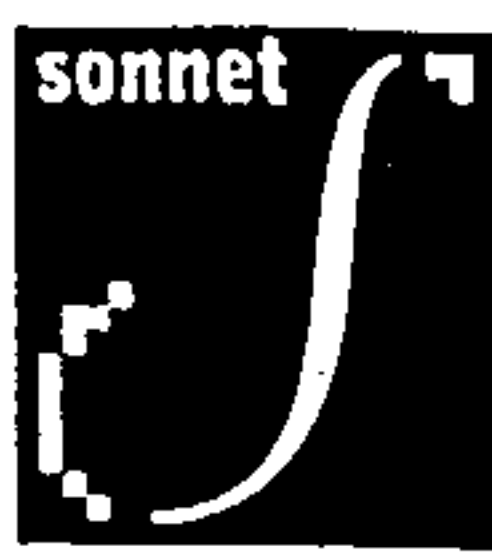
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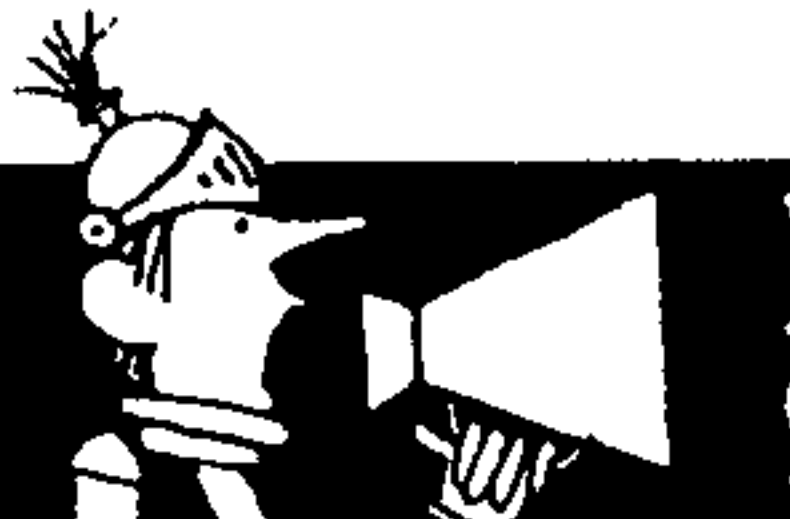
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Rowland Morgan's 'Digitations' in the Guardian (based on Green Party statistics)



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SPEECH WRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.



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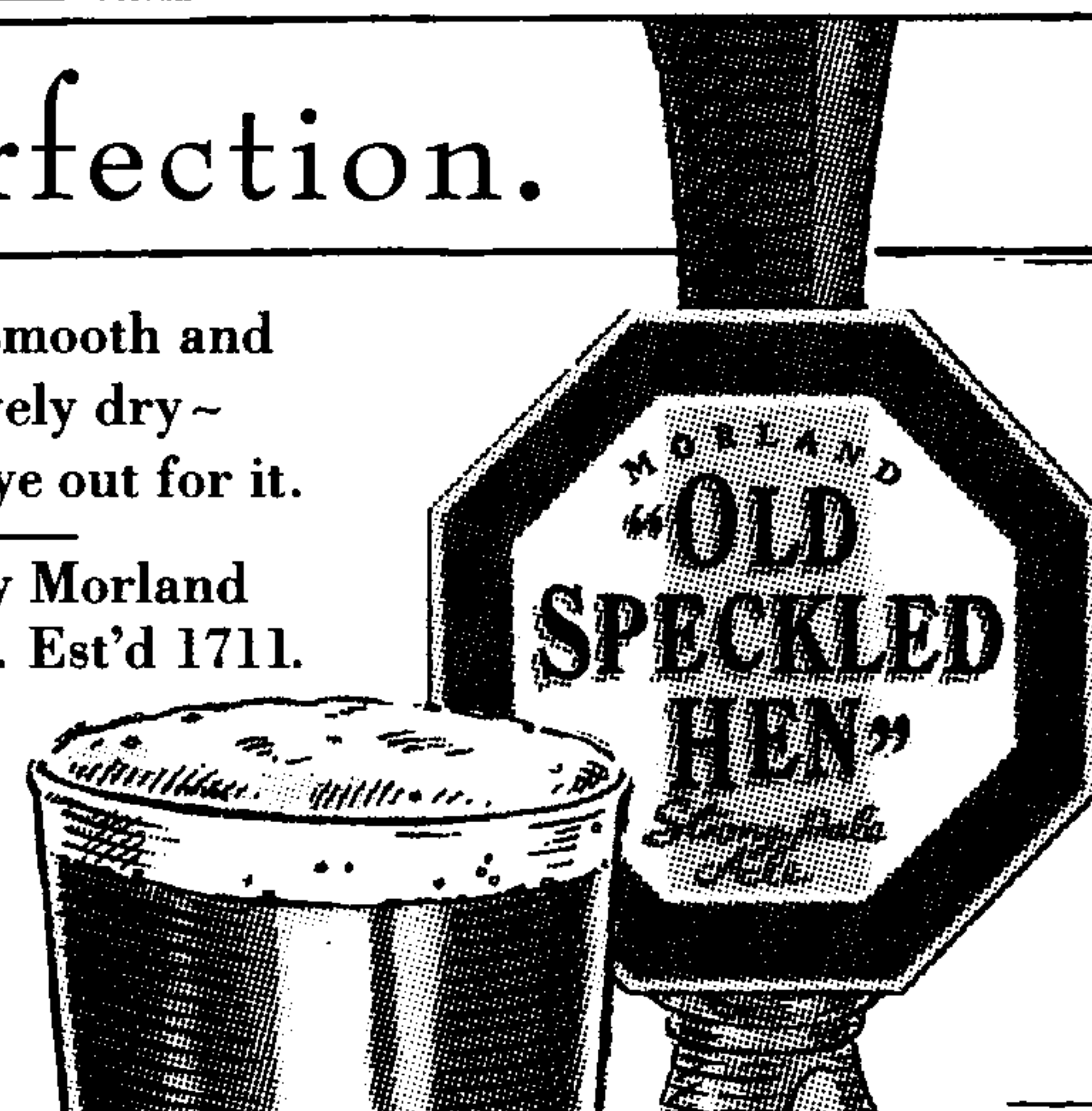
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ATTRACTIVE international businessman seeks good-looking fun-loving female (20-35) for travelling, romantic afternoons, fun and intimate relationship. Discretion assured. Please reply with photo and phone number to Box 3469.

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ANGLO-FROG, bilingual. Part-married, own flat central London, seeks educated, fun, curvy lady, married or not, for long term affair. Photo and phone please. Box 0872.

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HUMOROUS HACK 35, 6ft, skinny, Richard Gereish, divorced, sensitive, seeks pretty, sexy, informed, amusing, slightly sporty, caring woman. Box 3372.

PROFESSIONAL bloke, 50s, WLTM "Vicar's Wife" for discreet cuddly affair, London/SE. Box 3672.

LEARNER HUNK requires elegant female for taming. Me — 26, lean, goodlooking. You — 20-28, slim, long-legged, cultured and stylish. Must love fit, active life as well as quiet philosophic moments. Candles and red wine optional. Box 2172.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY educated unattached male seeks similar woman for fun, friendship and possible relationship. Box 2272.

MALE 33, fit, n/s, good-looking (allegedly) wicked sense of humour, stuck in frustrating marriage looking for lady 20/40 in similar situation for fun and frolics. Discretion guaranteed. Photo appreciated. Box 2372.

INCANDESCENT intellectual blonde, 31, frivolous, forthright and fascinating, seeks sympathetic fellow, 30-40, for enduring wonder, warmth and wickedness! Box 1772.

BUSINESS MAN 51, fit, OK-looking and successful. Trapped in lifeless marriage. Seeking attractive, slim 35+ lady to rekindle interest and fire. Berks/London/South. Photo ensures reply. Box 1872.

GOOD-LOOKING tall upper class chap, 38, with Phd seeks beautiful girl with brains, red nails and a xxx like a peach. Box 1972.

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WOMAN, 30, FEEDS on conversation and intimacy, friends, dancing, silliness, creating, thirty something pursuits, fits of feeling abnormal, fantasies. Looking for male friends, possible soulmate. Ring 0660 204361

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I'M FEMALE, 32, attractive, left-wing, into good beer, good music and good times. Are you a similar male 25-40? Call me. Ring 0660 204390

LONDON/BRIGHTON, FIT, friendly, 30 something man seeks slim, sensual, easygoing woman to share a summer full of sun and splendour. Ring 0660 204474

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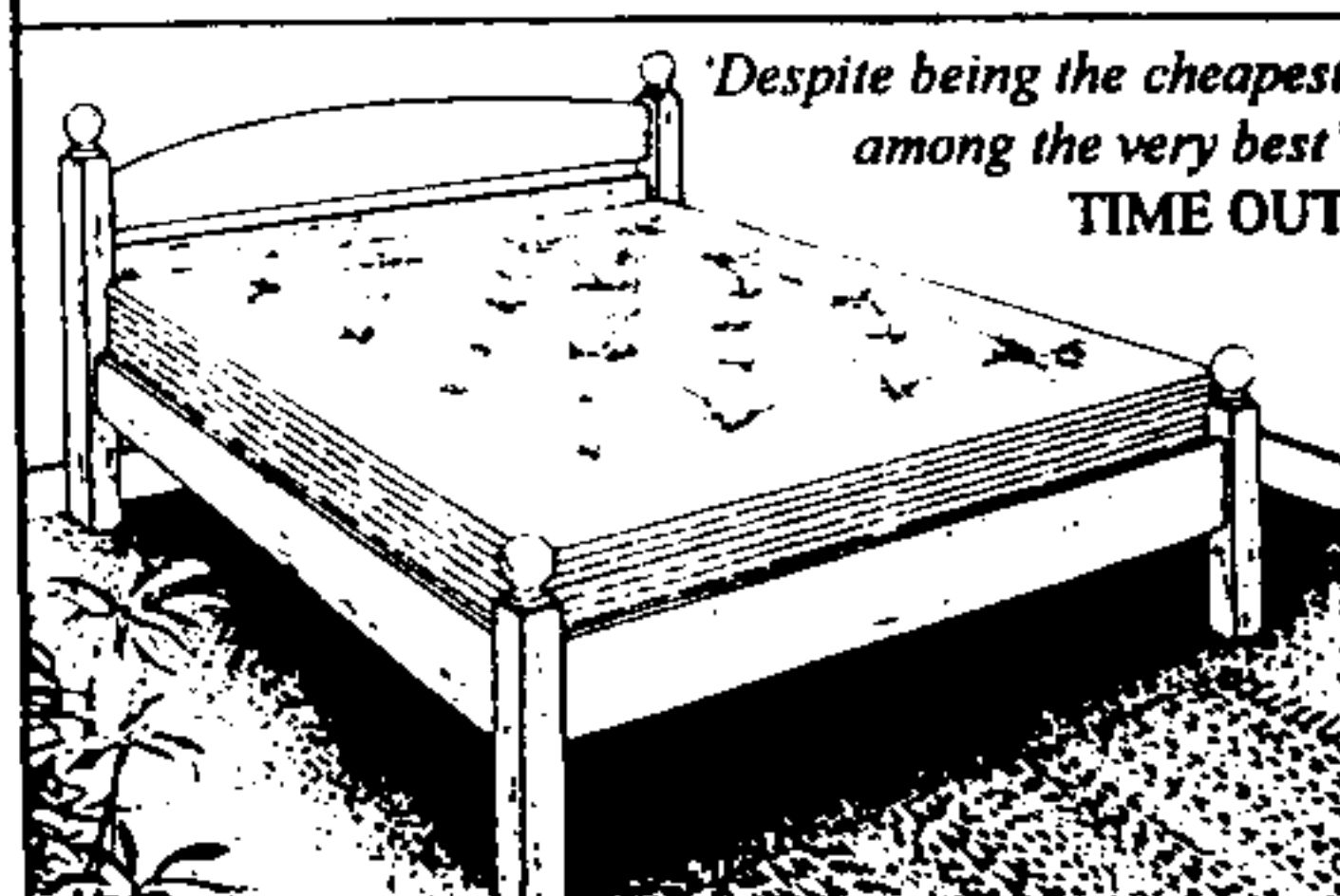


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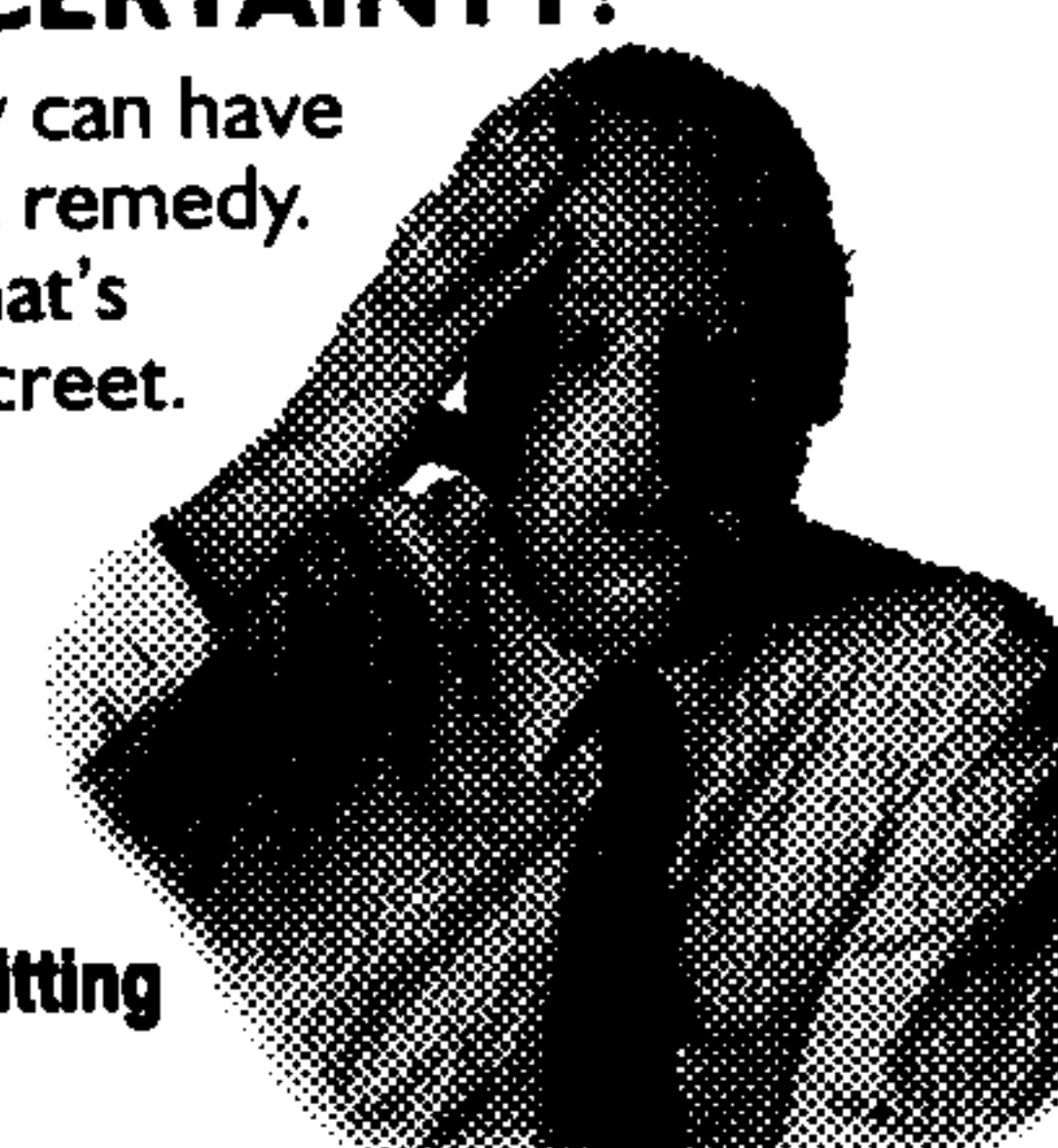
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If yes, how many live with you? _____

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Dress/Looks: casual ☐ fashionable ☐
elegant ☐ sporty ☐

4. Your work

Present job: _____

Self-employed ☐ employed ☐
civil servant ☐ manual worker ☐
part-time ☐ not working ☐
unemployed ☐ in-training ☐

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ☐ A levels ☐
Further Education ☐ Polytechnic ☐
University ☐ Business School ☐
Other: _____

5. Your Personality

☐ Warmhearted ☐ Fashionable
☐ Serious ☐ Practical
☐ Considerate ☐ Conventional
☐ Shy ☐ Reliable
☐ Romantic ☐ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

☐ always ready for a joke
☐ somewhat dreamy
☐ never has problems
☐ takes life a bit too seriously
☐ not easily upset
☐ always active
☐ chatty

7. Your interests

☐ Wining/Dining ☐ Jazz/Folk music
☐ Pubs ☐ Classical music
☐ Sports/Keep fit ☐ Theatre/Arts
☐ Politics/History ☐ Watching TV
☐ Reading ☐ Smoking
☐ Travelling ☐ Drinking
☐ Science/Tech ☐ Children
☐ Cinema ☐ Homemaking
☐ Pets/Animals ☐ Gardening
☐ Pop music ☐ Countryside



8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age: _____ Maximum age: _____

Height: min. _____ max. _____ Don't mind ☐

Children?
Yes, at home ☐ Yes, living elsewhere ☐
None ☐

Marital status: Single ☐ Divorced ☐

Widowed ☐ Separated ☐

Don't mind ☐

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

Dept. PE 41

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at
Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL or call us now on 071 938 1011

